南瓜とマヨネーズ　魚喃キリコ

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Pumpkin and Mayonnaise

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Pumpkin and Mayonnaise

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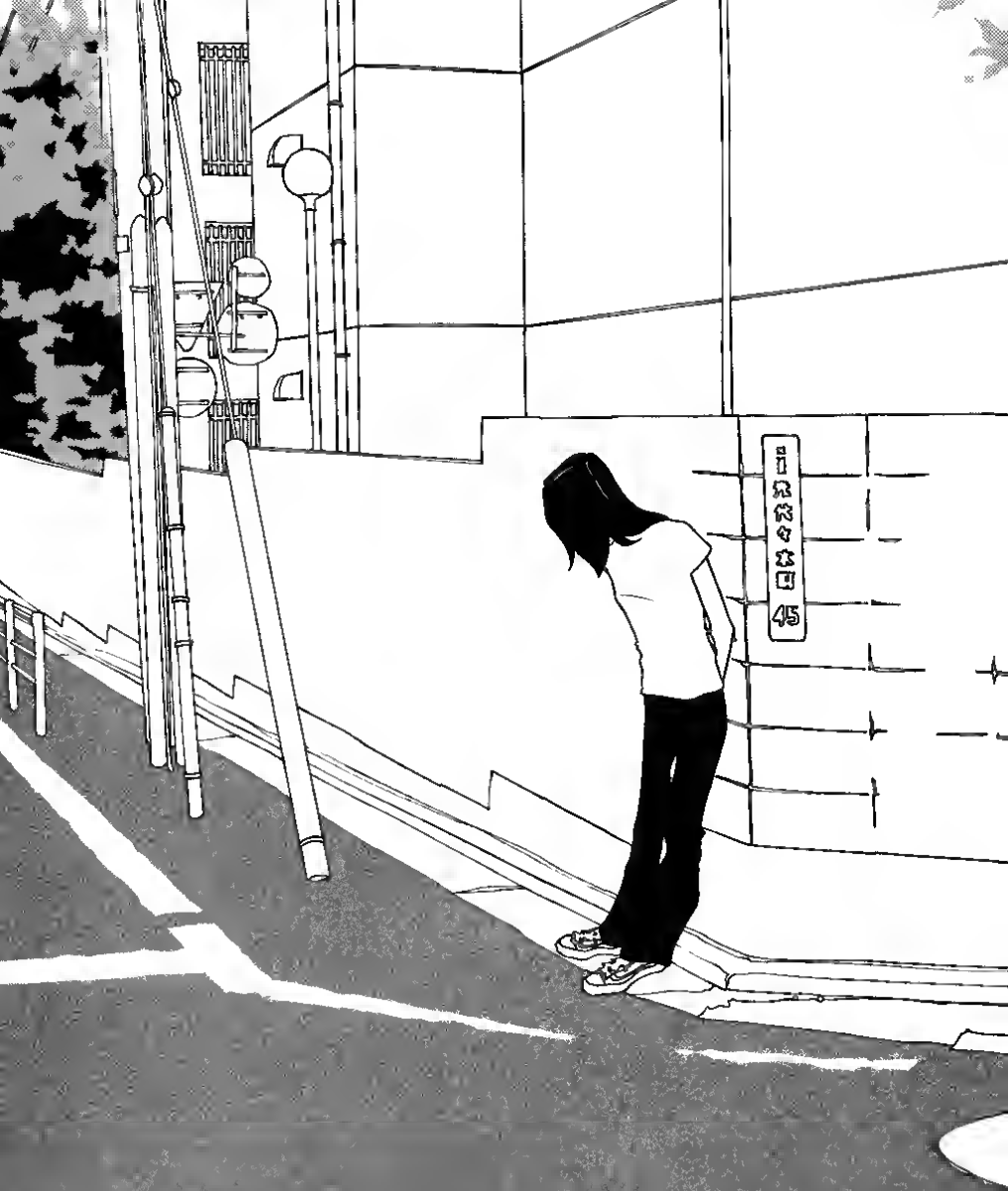
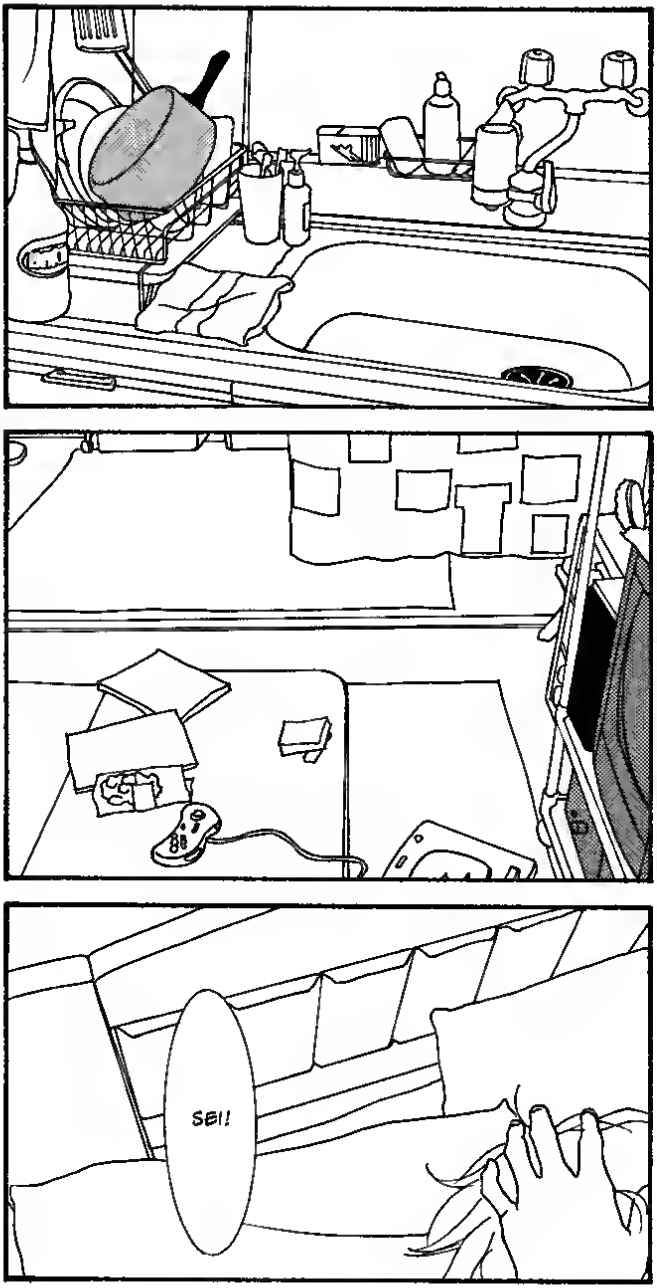


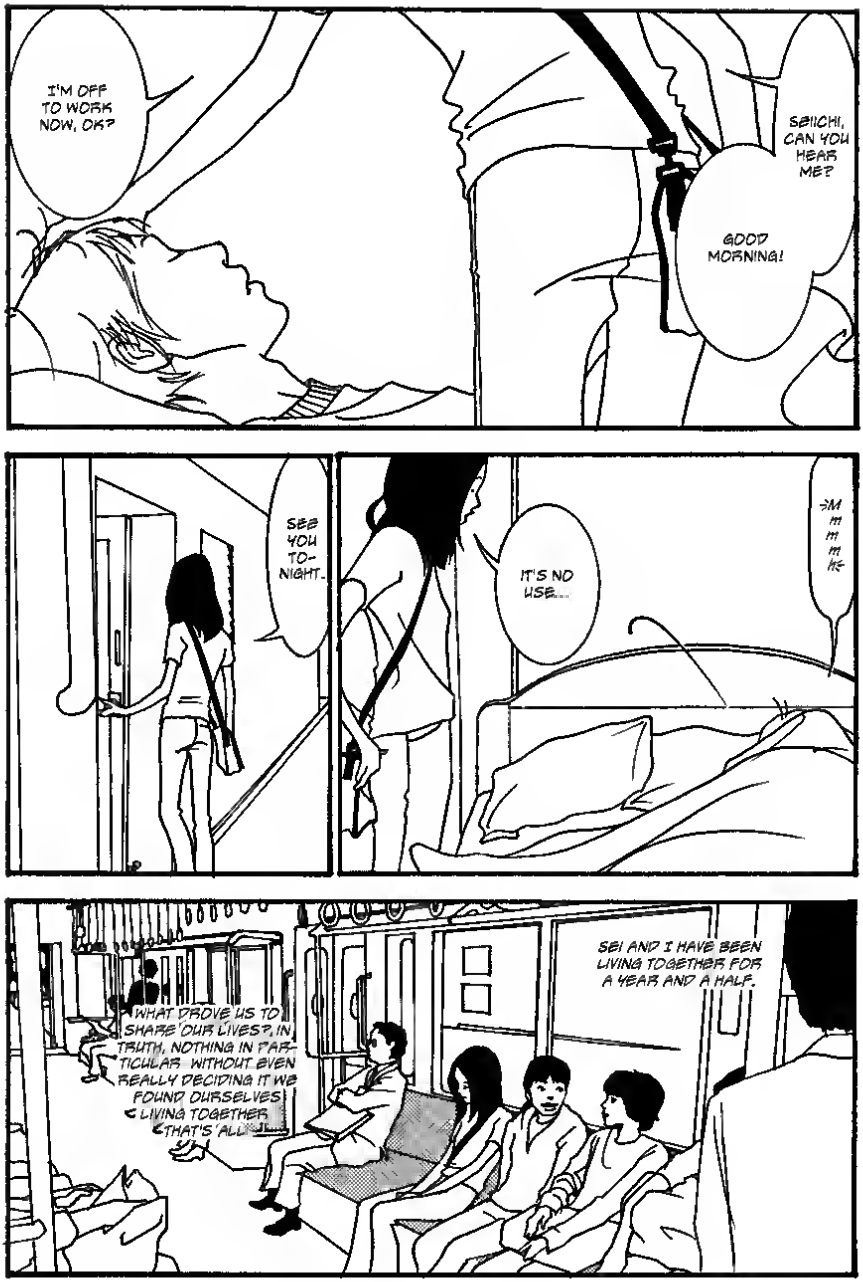
Chapter 1

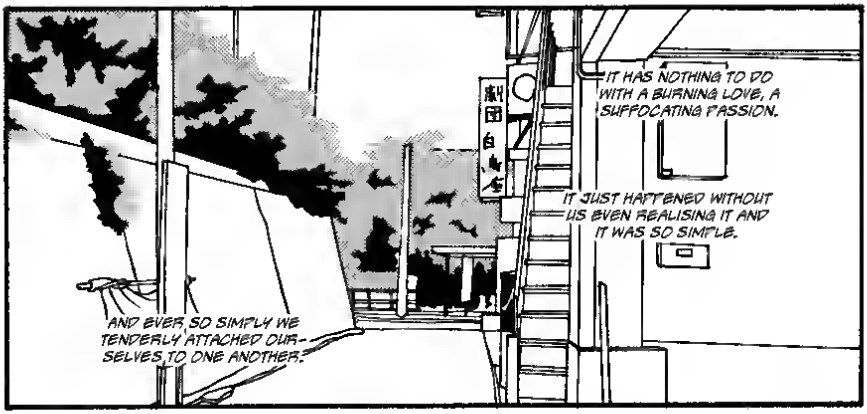
WE LIVE A SIMPLE, ORDINARY LIFE.

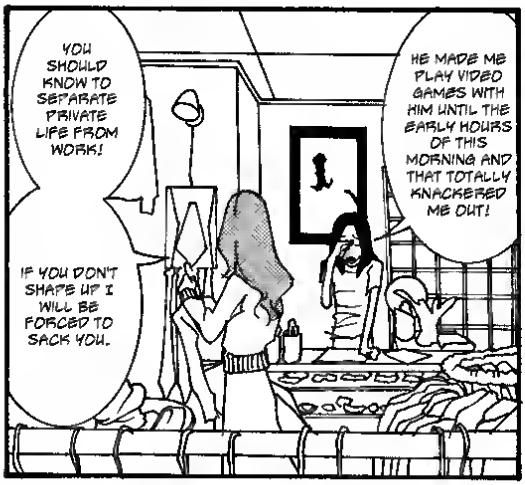
HOWEVER, EVEN NOW AT TIMES, I TELL MYSELF THAT...

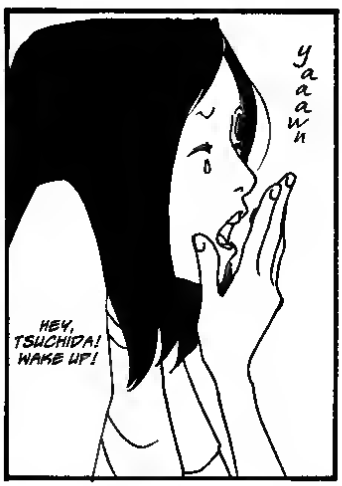
...I WOULD DO ANYTHING FOR HAGID.

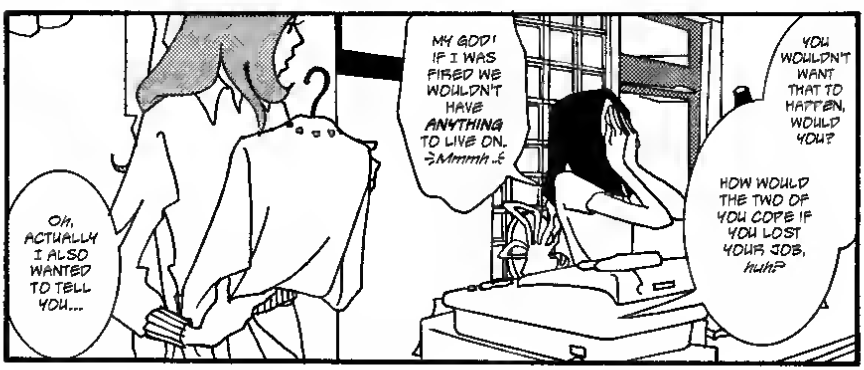

SEI!

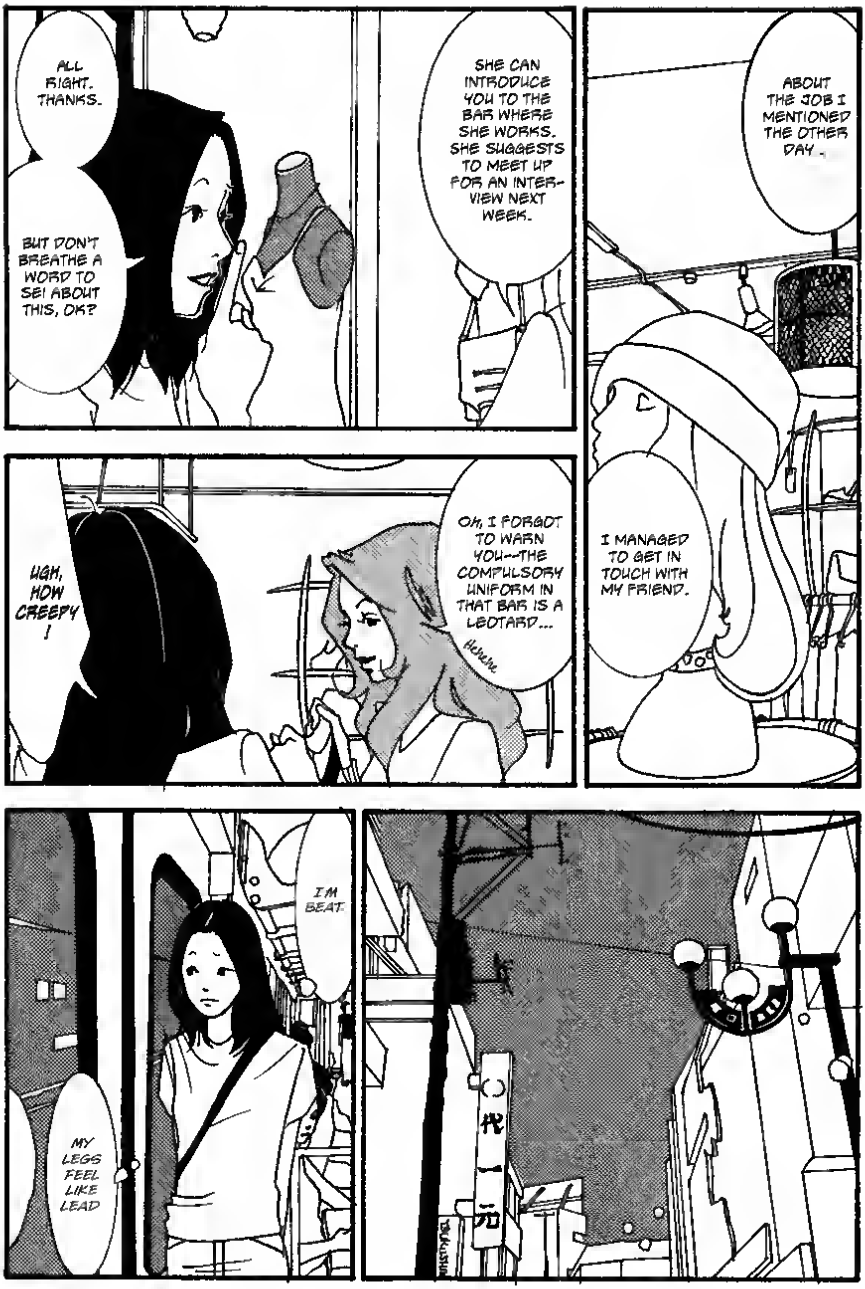

I'M OFF TO WORK NOW, OK?
SEIICHI, CAN YOU HEAR ME?
GOOD MORNING!
SEE YOU TO-NIGHT.
IT'S NO USE...
>M m m m k<
SEI AND I HAVE BEEN LIVING TOGETHER FOR A YEAR AND A HALF.
WHAT DROVE US TO SHARE OUR LIVES? IN TRUTH, NOTHING IN PARTICULAR. WITHOUT EVEN REALLY DECIDING IT WE FOUND OURSELVES LIVING TOGETHER. THAT'S ALL...

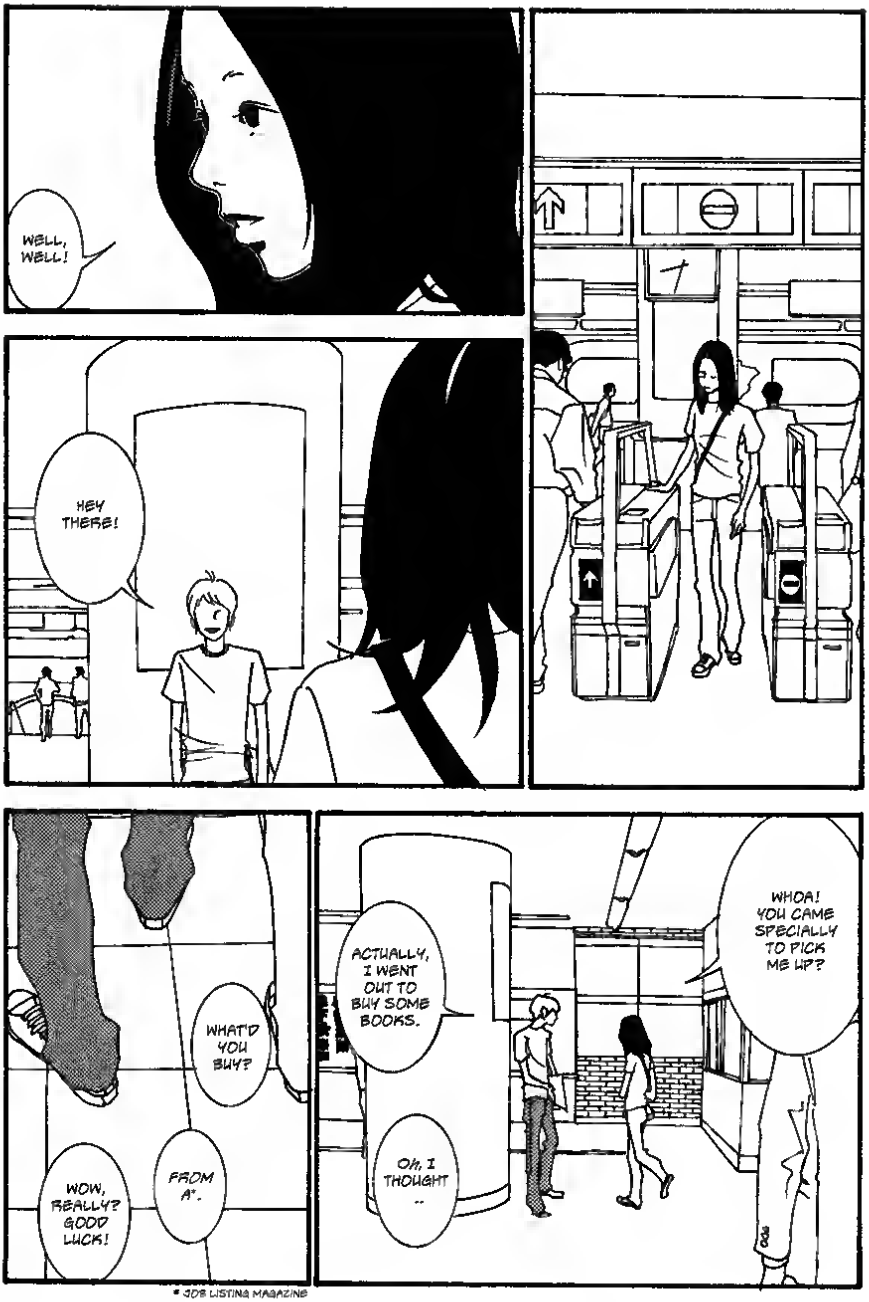

IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH A BURNING LOVE, A SUFFOCATING PASSION.
IT JUST HAPPENED WITHOUT US EVEN REALISING IT AND IT WAS SO SIMPLE.
AND EVER SO SIMPLY WE TENDERLY ATTACHED OURSELVES TO ONE ANOTHER.


YOU SHOULD KNOW TO SEPARATE PRIVATE LIFE FROM WORK!
IF YOU DON'T SHAPE UP I WILL BE FORCED TO SACK YOU.
HE MADE ME PLAY VIDEO GAMES WITH HIM UNTIL THE EARLY HOURS OF THIS MORNING AND THAT TOTALLY KNACKERED ME OUT!


yaaawn
HEY, TSUCHIDA! WAKE UP!


OH, ACTUALLY I ALSO WANTED TO TELL YOU...
MY GOD! IF I WAS FIRED WE WOULDN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO LIVE ON. >Mmmh..<
YOU WOULDN'T WANT THAT TO HAPPEN, WOULD YOU?
HOW WOULD THE TWO OF YOU COPE IF YOU LOST YOUR JOB, huh?

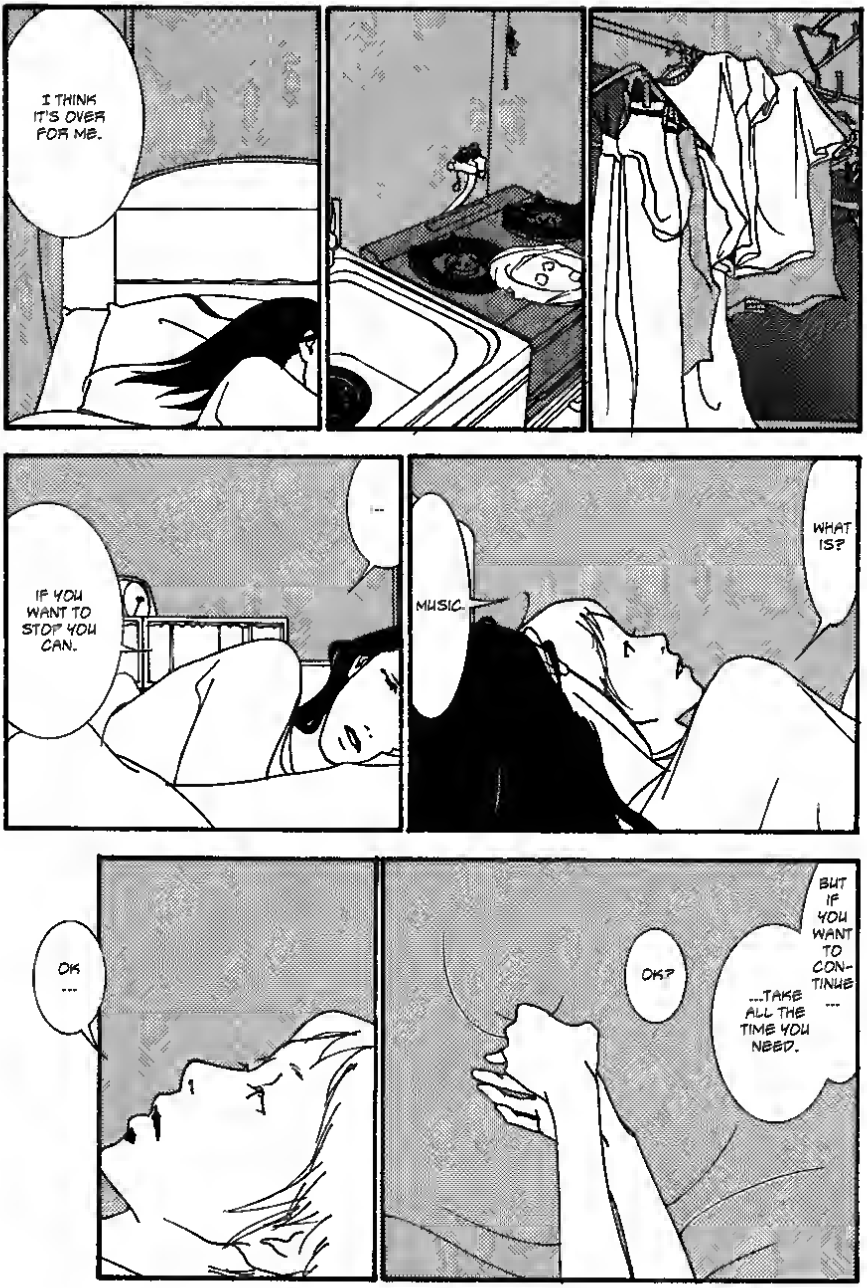

ABOUT THE JOB I MENTIONED THE OTHER DAY...
I MANAGED TO GET IN TOUCH WITH MY FRIEND.
SHE CAN INTRODUCE YOU TO THE BAR WHERE SHE WORKS. SHE SUGGESTS TO MEET UP FOR AN INTERVIEW NEXT WEEK.
ALL RIGHT. THANKS.
BUT DON'T BREATHE A WORD TO SE! ABOUT THIS, OK?
OH, I FORGOT TO WARN YOU--THE COMPULSORY UNIFORM IN THAT BAR IS A LEOTARD...
HEHEHE
UGH, HOW CREEPY!
I'M BEAT.
MY LEGS FEEL LIKE LEAD

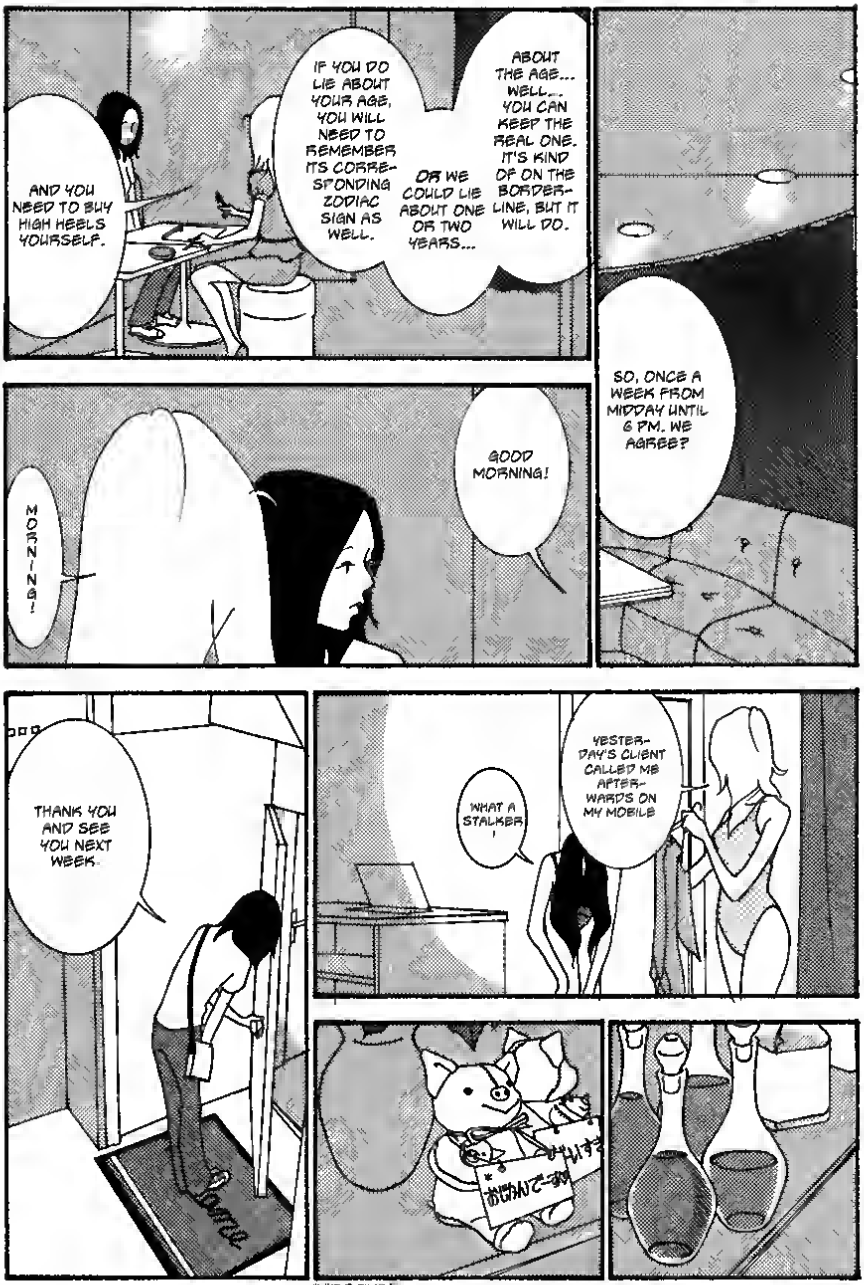

WELL, WELL!
HEY THERE!
WHOA! YOU CAME SPECIALLY TO PICK ME UP?
ACTUALLY, I WENT OUT TO BUY SOME BOOKS.
OH, I THOUGHT ..
WHAT'D YOU BUY?
FROM A*.
WOW, REALLY? GOOD LUCK!

* JOB LISTING MAGAZINE

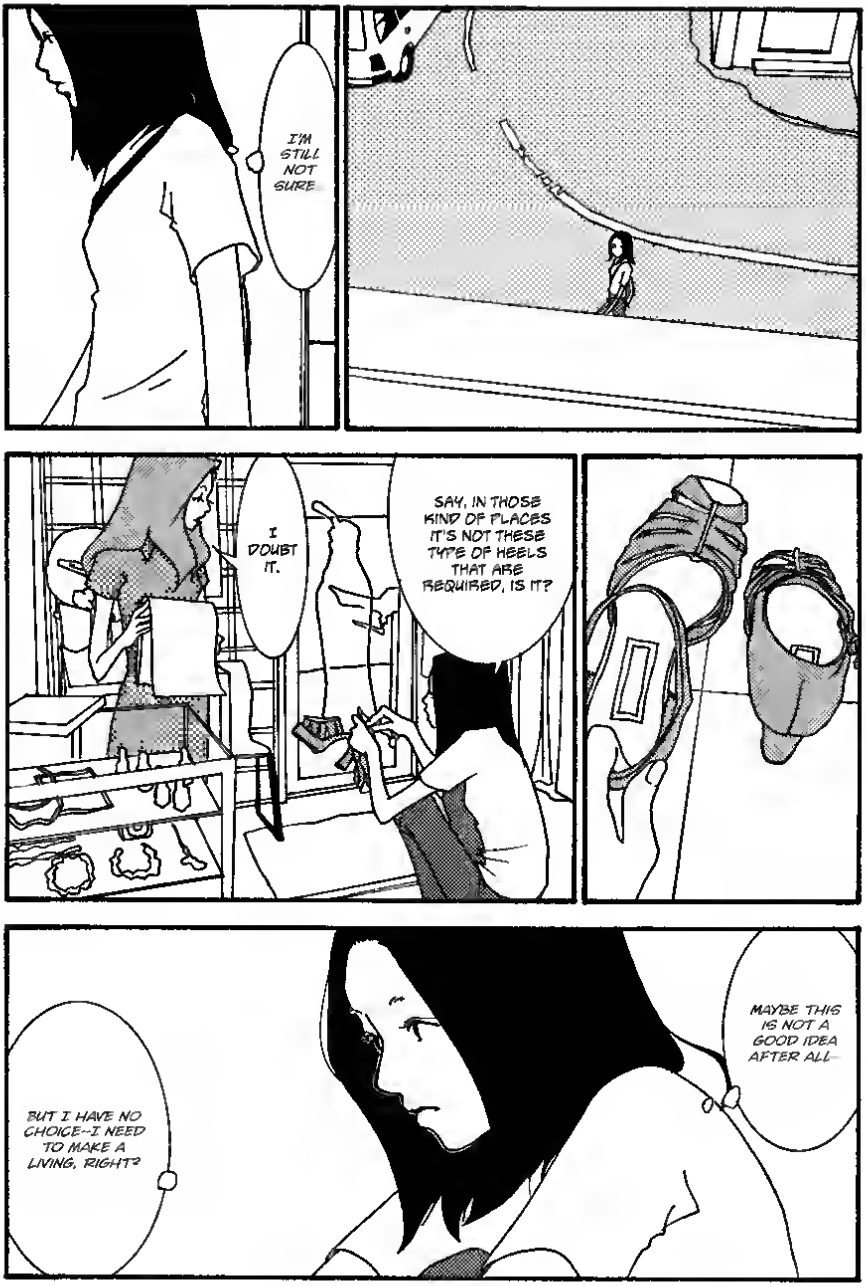
A LOVELY SMELL WAS COMING FROM THE VENTILATION OF A NOODLE RESTAURANT.
ON THE WAY BACK WE BOUGHT LEEKS AND FISH FROM THE SUPERMARKET.
WE TALKED ABOUT EVERYTHING AND NOTHING
ALL THOSE LITTLE THINGS MAKE ME THINK THAT IS WHAT REAL HAPPINESS IS.
DEAR GOD! WHAT A MESS!
I CAN'T LIVE IN SUCH A PIGSTY!
MY BAD! SORRY!
AH, IT'S NICE TO BE BACK HOME!
OH ...

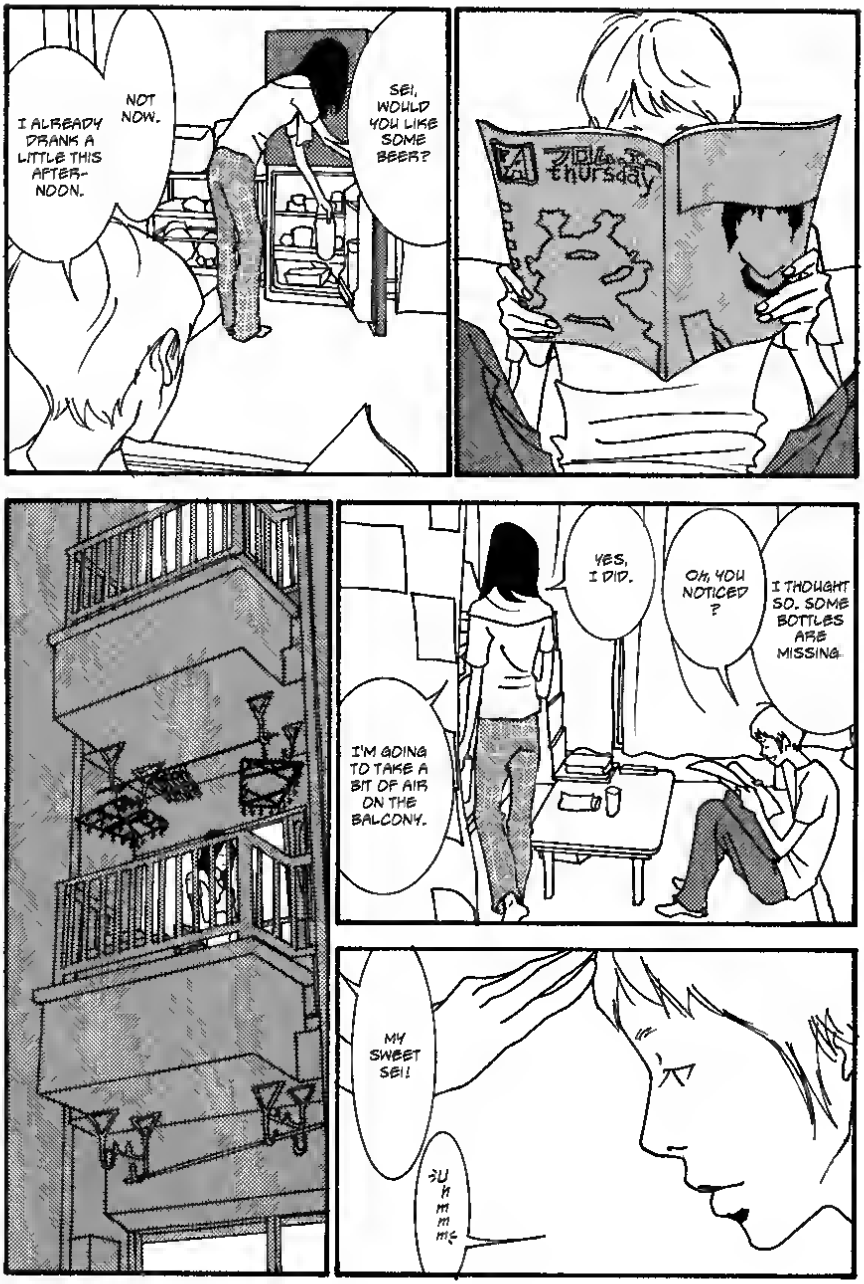
WERE YOU WRITING A NEW SONG?
YEAH BUT I COULDN'T FINISH IT.
I COULDN'T DO IT, AFTER ALL...
WELL, AT LEAST YOU TRIED! THAT'S STILL A LOT.
ALL RIGHT, NOW IT'S MY TURN TO MAKE AN EFFORT!
SEIICHI WOULD LIKE TO MAKE IT IN MUSIC
(OR ACTUALLY HE WOULD HAVE LOVED TO).
HE SEEMS TO FIND IT DIFFICULT TO FORM PROPER RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE OTHER MEMBERS OF HIS BAND. IT'S EATING AWAY AT HIM AND HE CAN'T ACHIEVE ANYTHING...


I THINK IT'S OVER FOR ME.
...
IF YOU WANT TO STOP YOU CAN.
MUSIC.
WHAT IS?
OK ...
OK?
BUT IF YOU WANT TO CONTINUE ...
...TAKE ALL THE TIME YOU NEED.

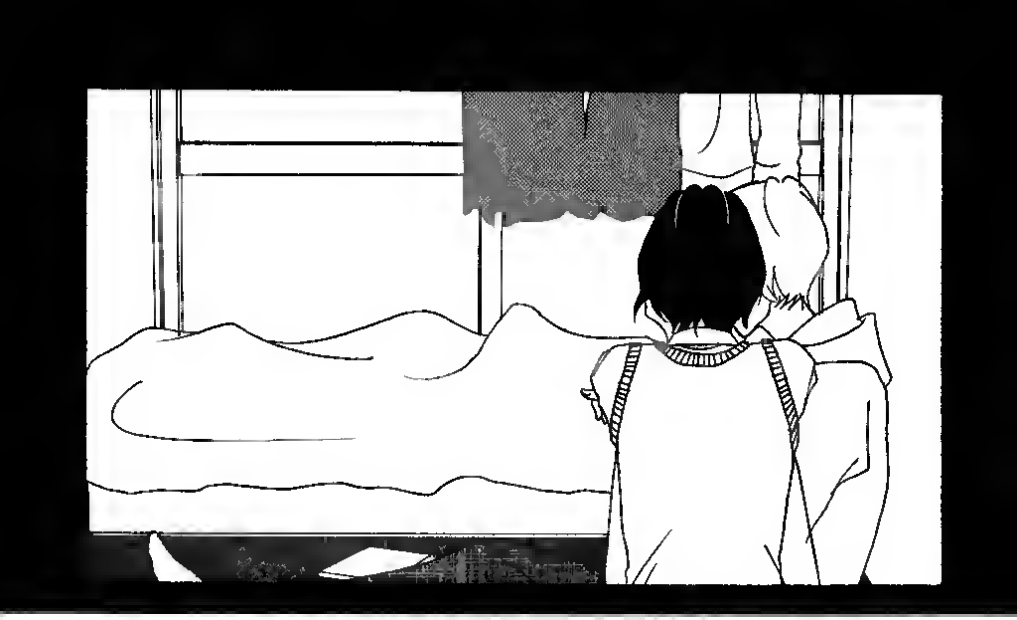

AND YOU NEED TO BUY HIGH HEELS YOURSELF.
IF YOU DO LIE ABOUT YOUR AGE, YOU WILL NEED TO REMEMBER ITS CORRESPONDING ZODIAC SIGN AS WELL.
OR WE COULD LIE ABOUT ONE OR TWO YEARS...
ABOUT THE AGE... WELL... YOU CAN KEEP THE REAL ONE. IT'S KIND OF ON THE BORDERLINE, BUT IT WILL DO.
SO, ONCE A WEEK FROM MIDDAY UNTIL 6 PM. WE AGREE?
GOOD MORNING!
MORNING!
THANK YOU AND SEE YOU NEXT WEEK.
WHAT A STALKER!
YESTERDAY'S CLIENT CALLED ME AFTERWARDS ON MY MOBILE
*

* "IT'S TIME!"


I'M STILL NOT SURE
I DOUBT IT.
SAY, IN THOSE KIND OF PLACES IT'S NOT THESE TYPE OF HEELS THAT ARE REQUIRED, IS IT?
MAYBE THIS IS NOT A GOOD IDEA AFTER ALL...
BUT I HAVE NO CHOICE--I NEED TO MAKE A LIVING, RIGHT?


SEI, WOULD YOU LIKE SOME BEER?
NOT NOW.
I ALREADY DRANK A LITTLE THIS AFTER-NOON.
thursday
I THOUGHT SO. SOME BOTTLES ARE MISSING.
OH, YOU NOTICED ?
YES, I DID.
I'M GOING TO TAKE A BIT OF AIR ON THE BALCONY.
MY SWEET SEI!
Uhmmm

tchk!
IF IT WAS FOR HAGIO...
I WOULD PROBABLY DO ANYTHING

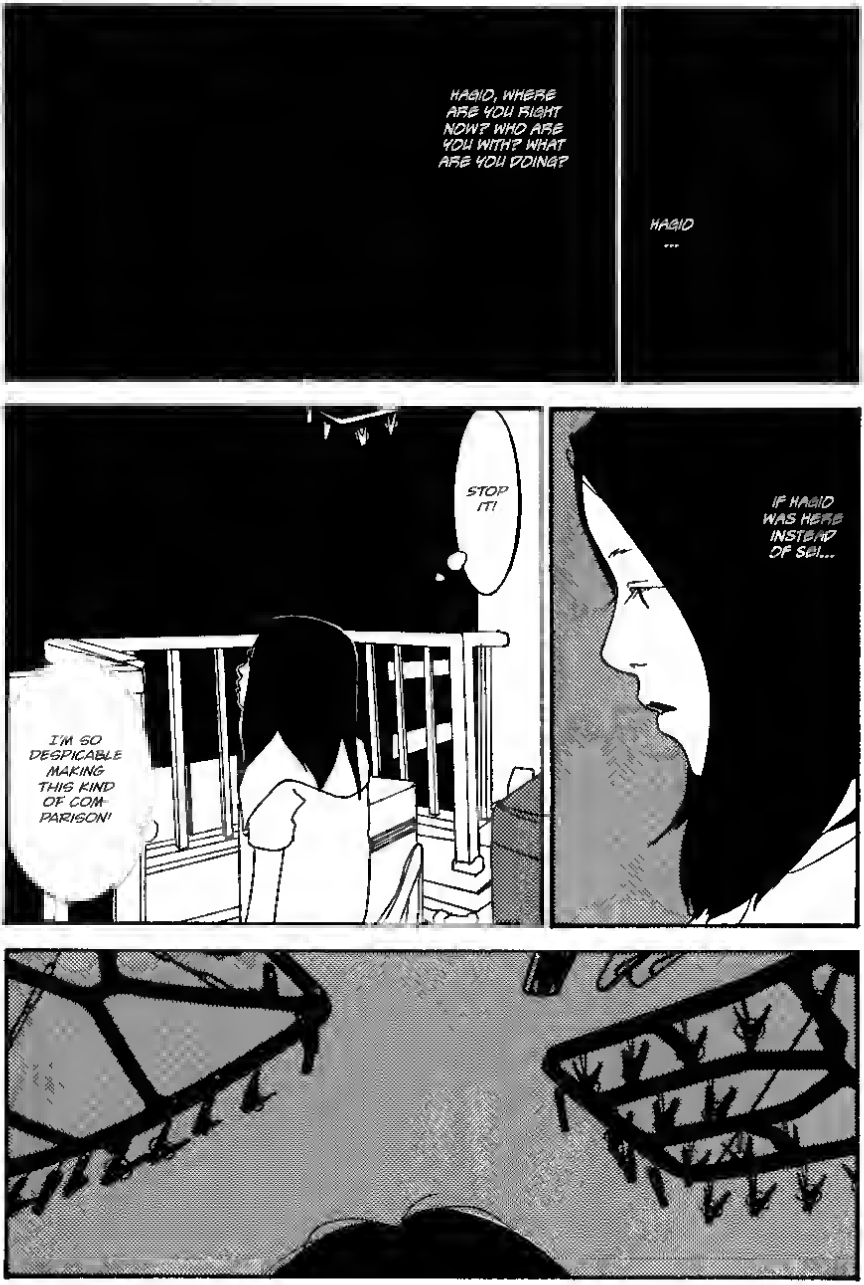


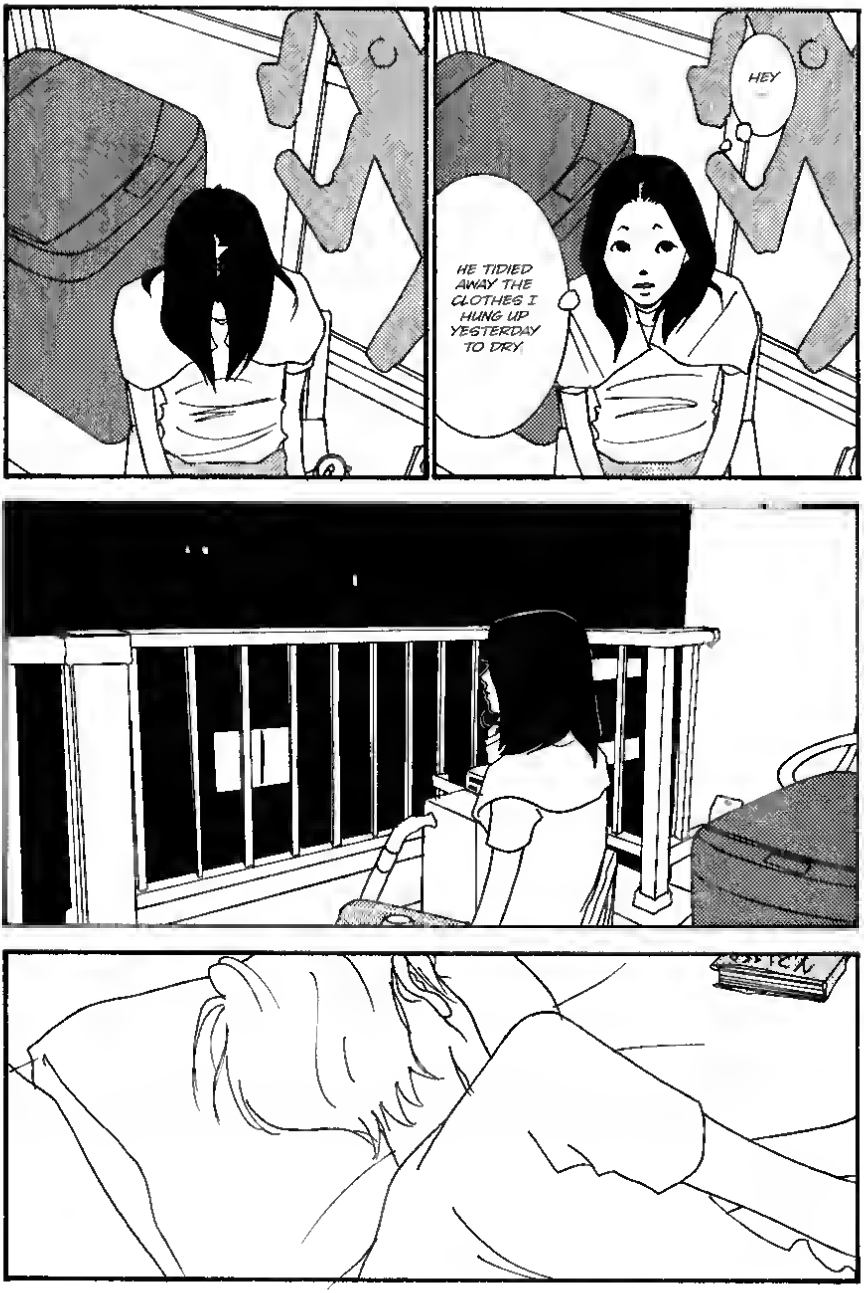
HAGIO ...

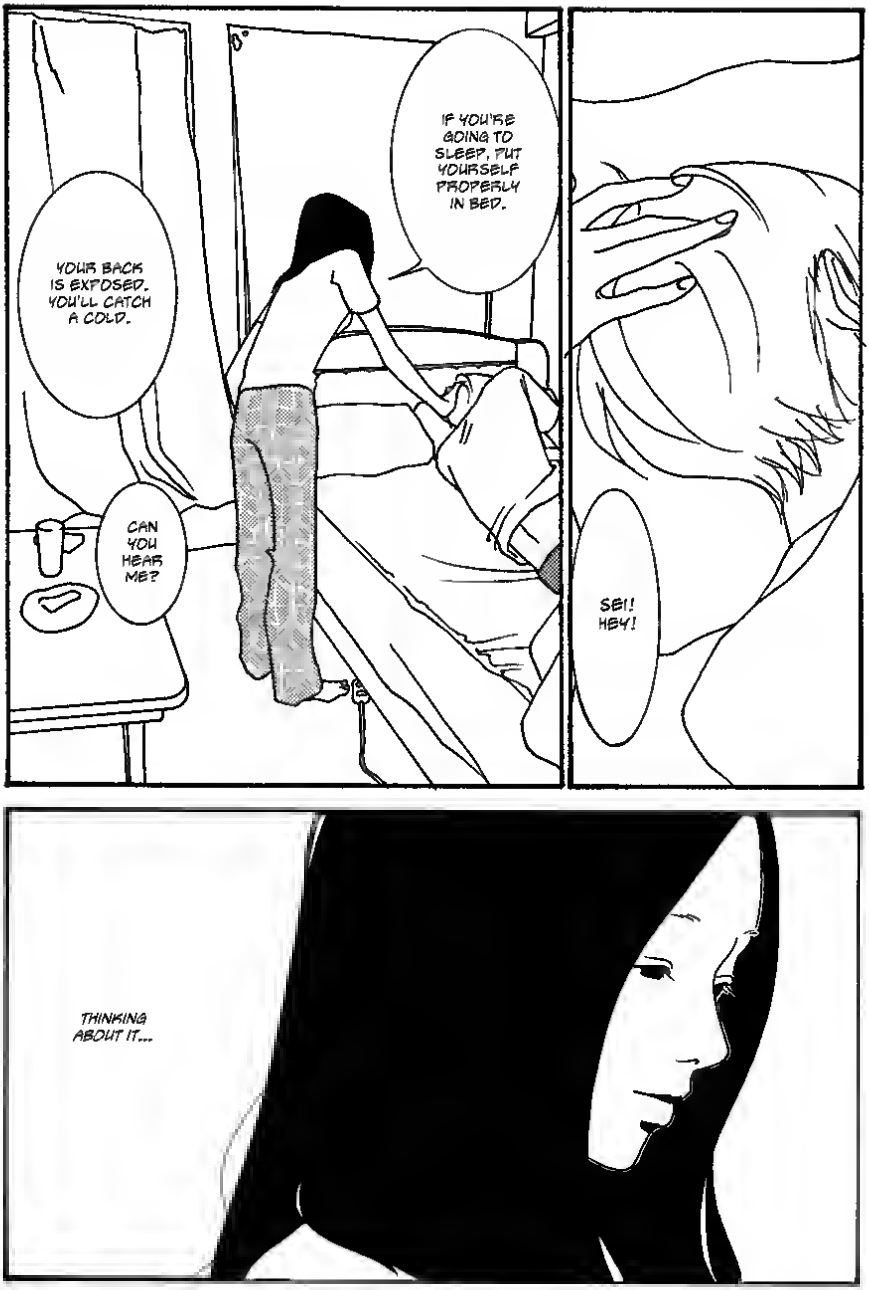
HE USED TO BRING HOME A LOT OF GIRLS AND NOT ONLY GIRLS THAT HE CARED FOR.

I WAS ONE OF THEM I BECAME PREGNANT AND HAD AN ABORTION.

STILL, THAT DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT I LOVED THAT MAN WITH ALL MY HEART.


HAGID, WHERE ARE YOU RIGHT NOW? WHO ARE YOU WITH? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
HAGID ...
STOP IT!
I'M SO DESPICABLE MAKING THIS KIND OF COMPARISON!
IF HAGID WAS HERE INSTEAD OF SOI...


HEY
HE TIDIED AWAY THE CLOTHES I HUNG UP YESTERDAY TO DRY.


IF YOU'RE GOING TO SLEEP, PUT YOURSELF PROPERLY IN BED.
YOUR BACK IS EXPOSED. YOU'LL CATCH A COLD.
CAN YOU HEAR ME?
SEI! HEY!
THINKING ABOUT IT...

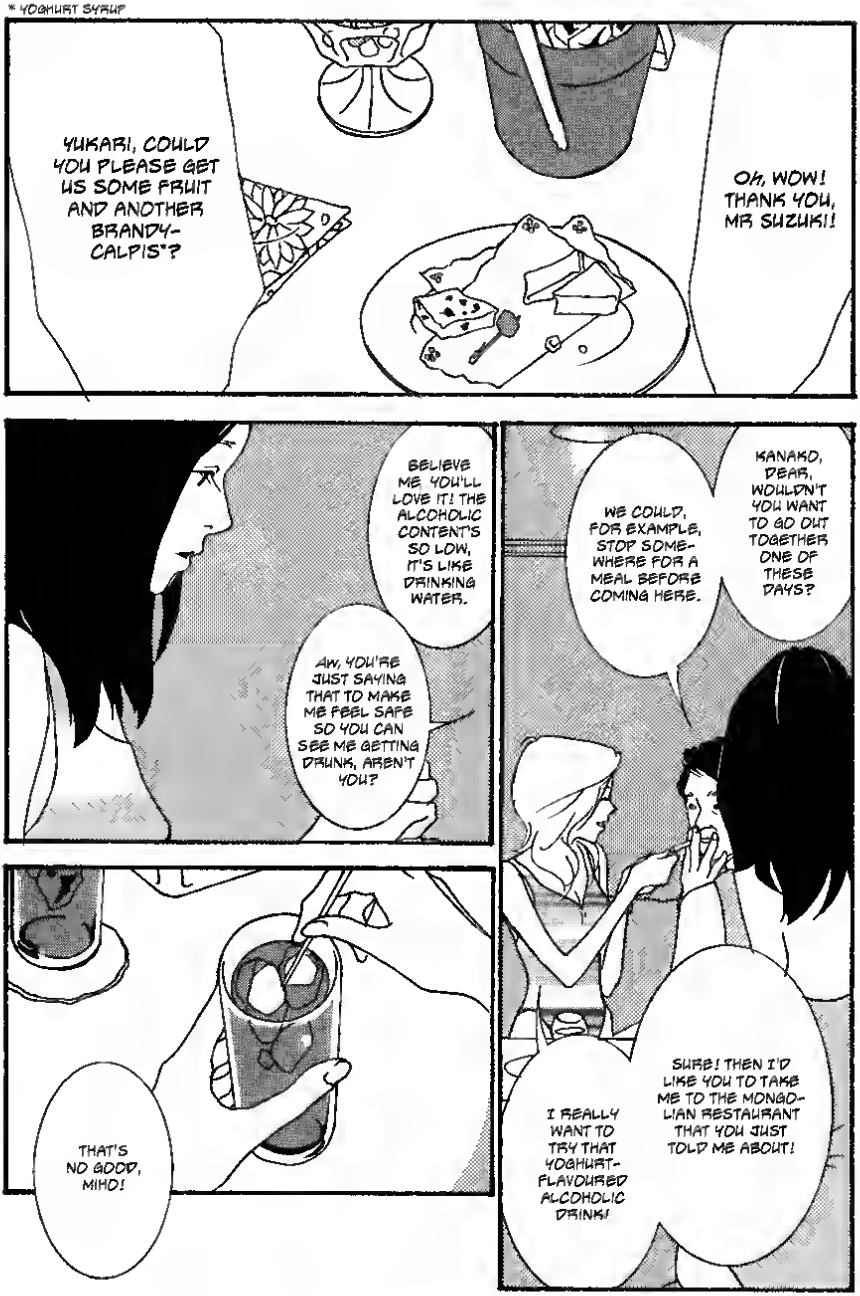
...I HAVE TO ADMIT THAT HAGIO MADE ME SUFFER DEEPLY...

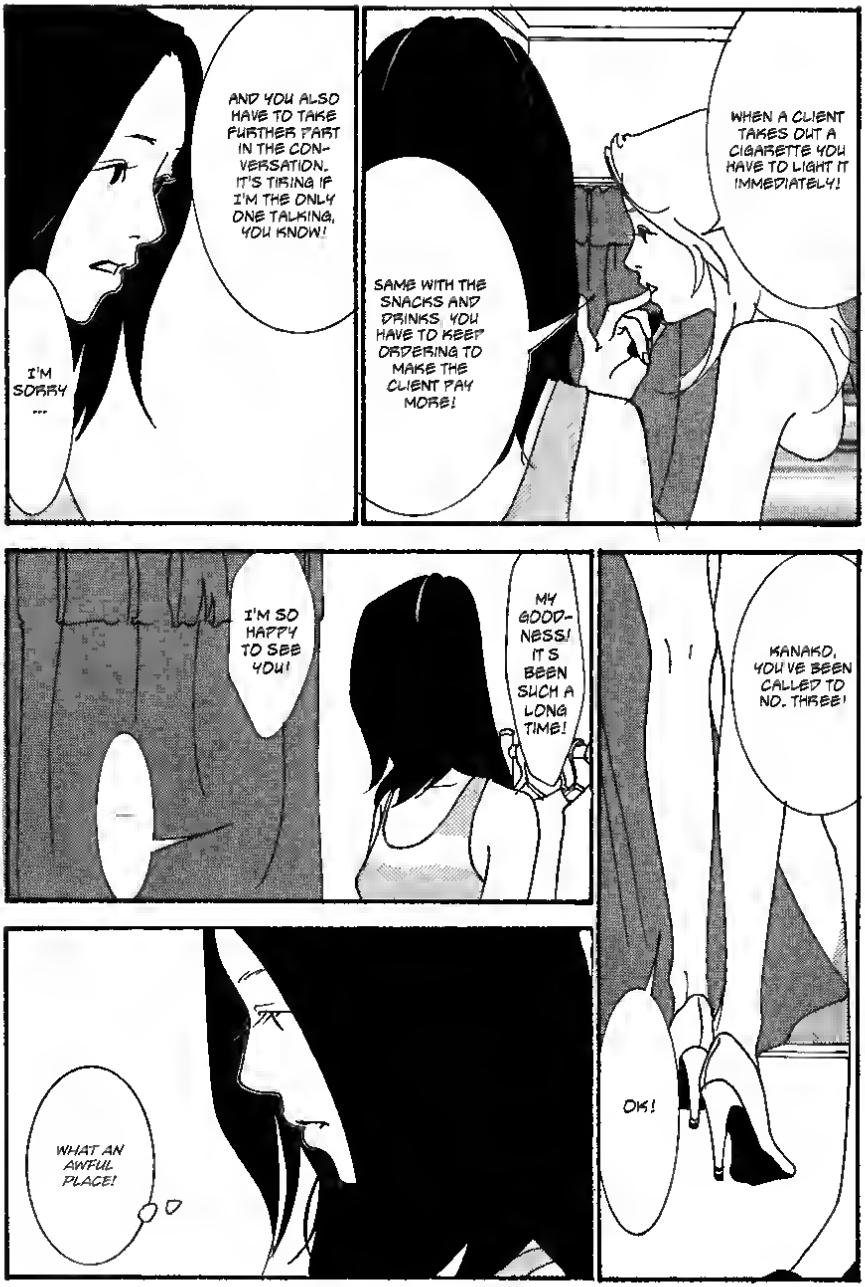
...AND THE PERSON WHO SAVED ME IS HERE WITH ME RIGHT NOW.

MAYBE DEEP DOWN I LOVE HIM AS MUCH AS I LOVED HAGIO.

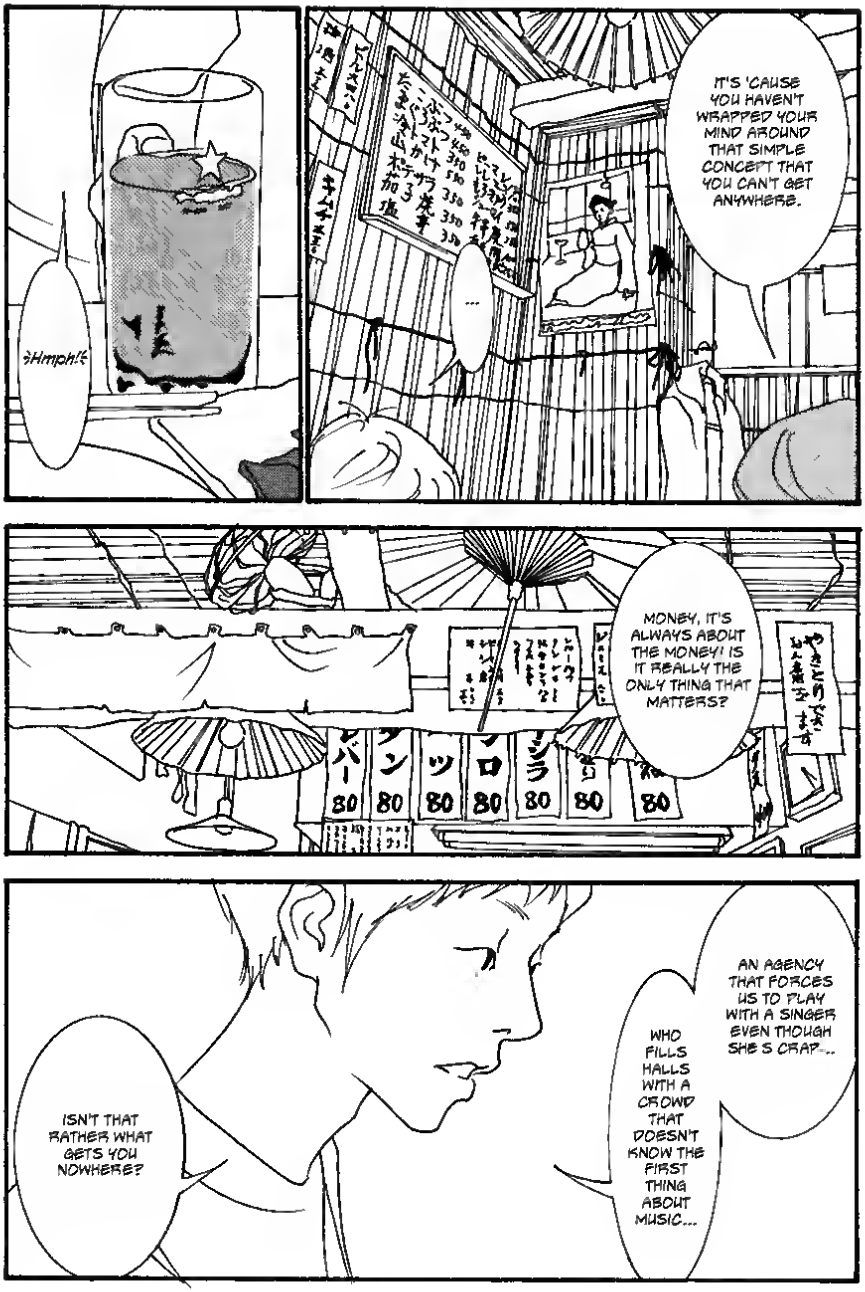
Chapter 2

* YOGHURT SYRUP

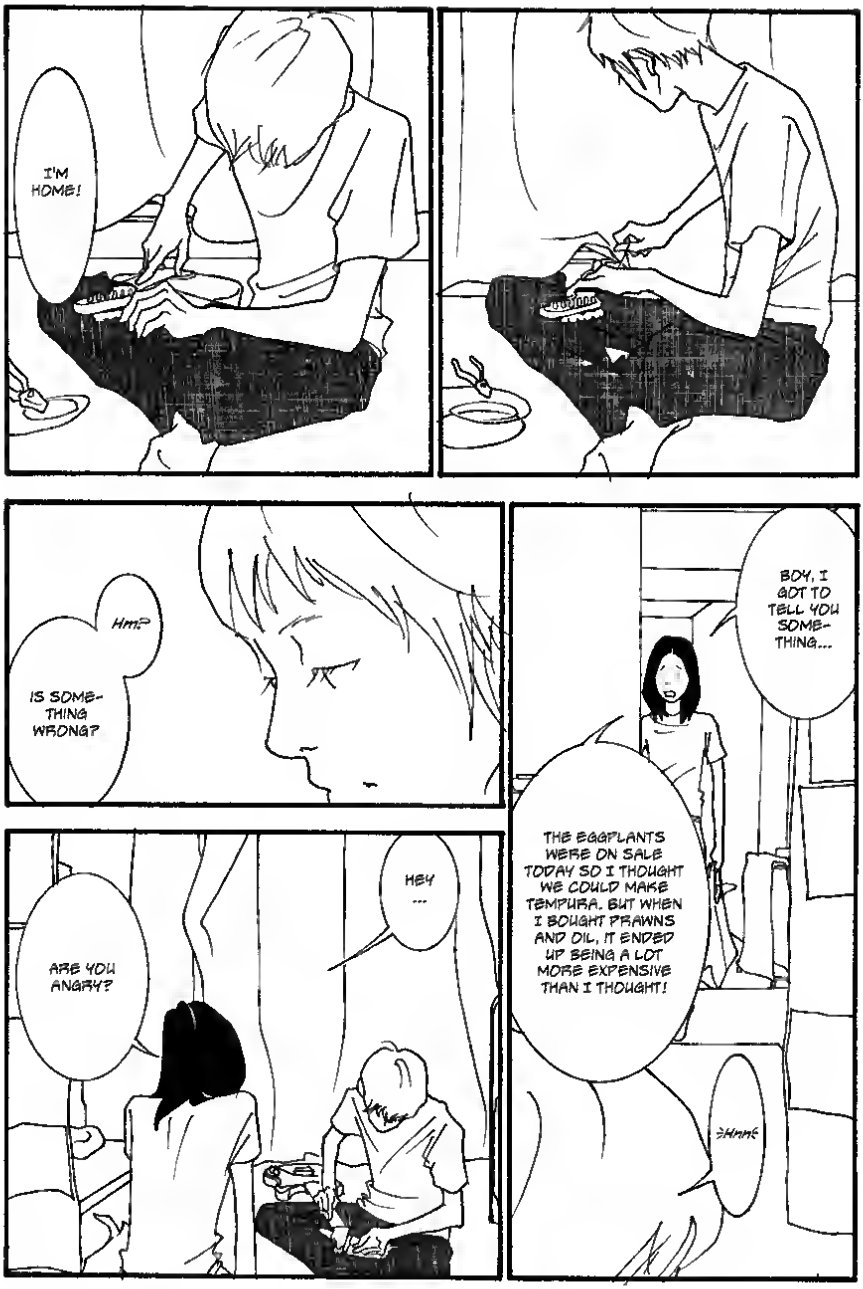

YUKARI, COULD YOU PLEASE GET US SOME FRUIT AND ANOTHER BRANDY-CALPIS*?
OH, WOW! THANK YOU, MR SUZUKI!
KANAKO, DEAR, WOULDN'T YOU WANT TO GO OUT TOGETHER ONE OF THESE DAYS?
WE COULD, FOR EXAMPLE, STOP SOMEWHERE FOR A MEAL BEFORE COMING HERE.
SURE! THEN I'D LIKE YOU TO TAKE ME TO THE MONGOLIAN RESTAURANT THAT YOU JUST TOLD ME ABOUT!
I REALLY WANT TO TRY THAT YOGHURT-FLAVOURED ALCOHOLIC DRINK!
BELIEVE ME, YOU'LL LOVE IT! THE ALCOHOLIC CONTENT'S SO LOW, IT'S LIKE DRINKING WATER.
AW, YOU'RE JUST SAYING THAT TO MAKE ME FEEL SAFE SO YOU CAN SEE ME GETTING DRUNK, AREN'T YOU?
THAT'S NO GOOD, MIHO!

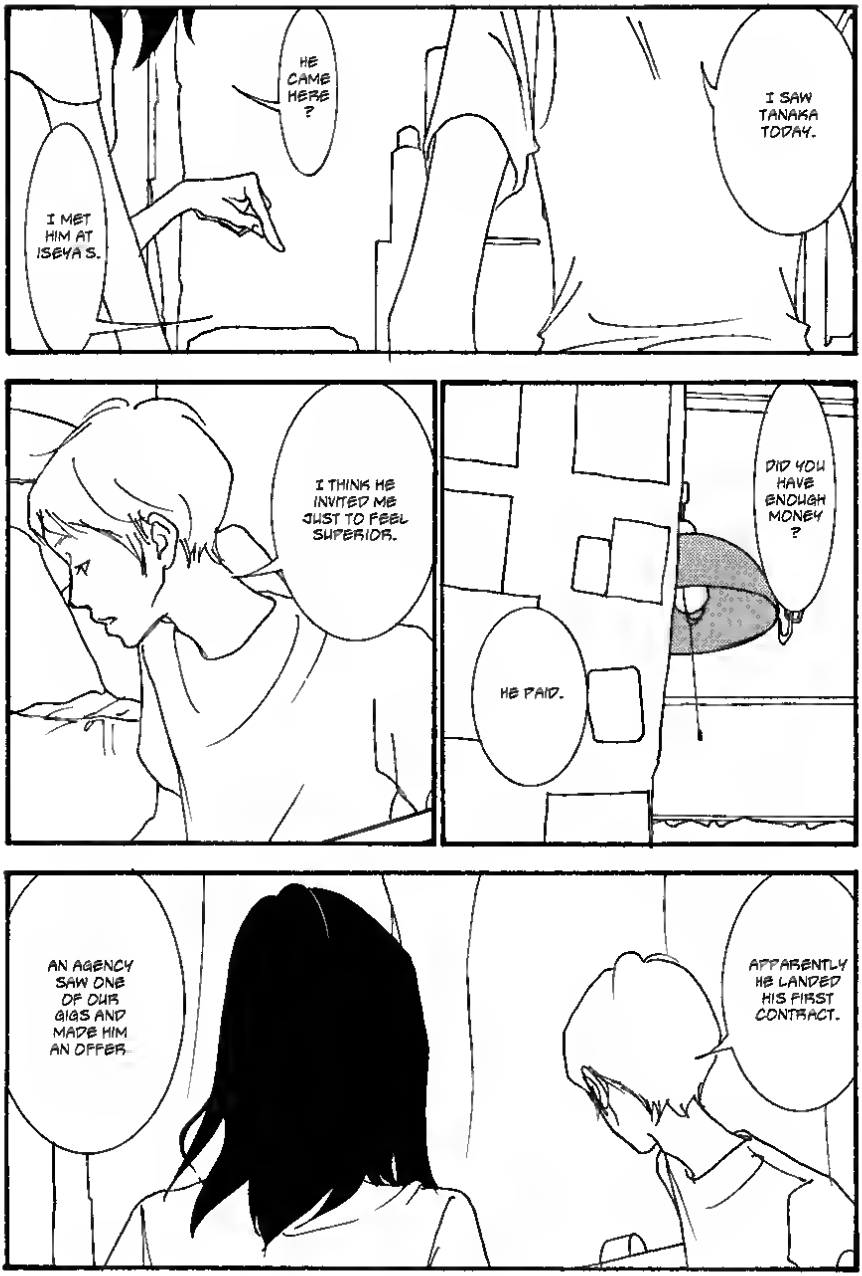

WHEN A CLIENT TAKES OUT A CIGARETTE YOU HAVE TO LIGHT IT IMMEDIATELY!
SAME WITH THE SNACKS AND DRINKS. YOU HAVE TO KEEP ORDERING TO MAKE THE CLIENT PAY MORE!
AND YOU ALSO HAVE TO TAKE FURTHER PART IN THE CONVERSATION. IT'S TIRING IF I'M THE ONLY ONE TALKING, YOU KNOW!
I'M SORRY ...
KANAKO, YOU'VE BEEN CALLED TO NO. THREE!
OK!
MY GOODNESS! IT'S BEEN SUCH A LONG TIME!
I'M SO HAPPY TO SEE YOU!
WHAT AN AWFUL PLACE!

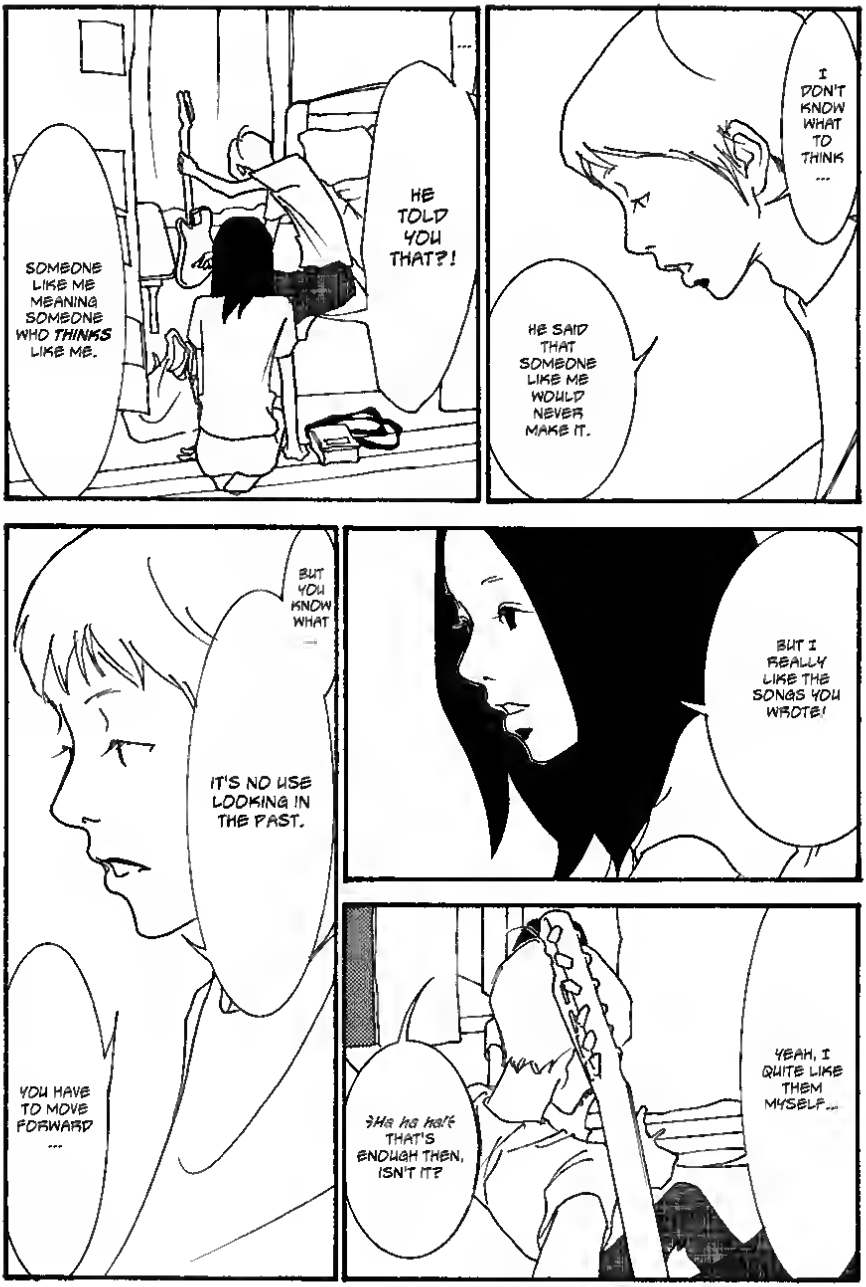
...
THIS IS HOW THINGS WORK IN THIS BUSINESS. SOMETIMES YOU GOT TO MAKE A FEW CONCESSIONS.
WHAT YOU LACK IS PROFESSIONALISM.
THOSE GUYS, THEY'RE ONLY INTERESTED IN US AS MERCHANDISE ANYWAY!
IF YOU WANT TO SEE MONEY, YOU HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO SUCK UP TO THE AGENCY.
WHEN YOU'RE TOLD TO MAKE COMMERCIAL STUFF YOU HAVE TO DO IT, PERIOD.

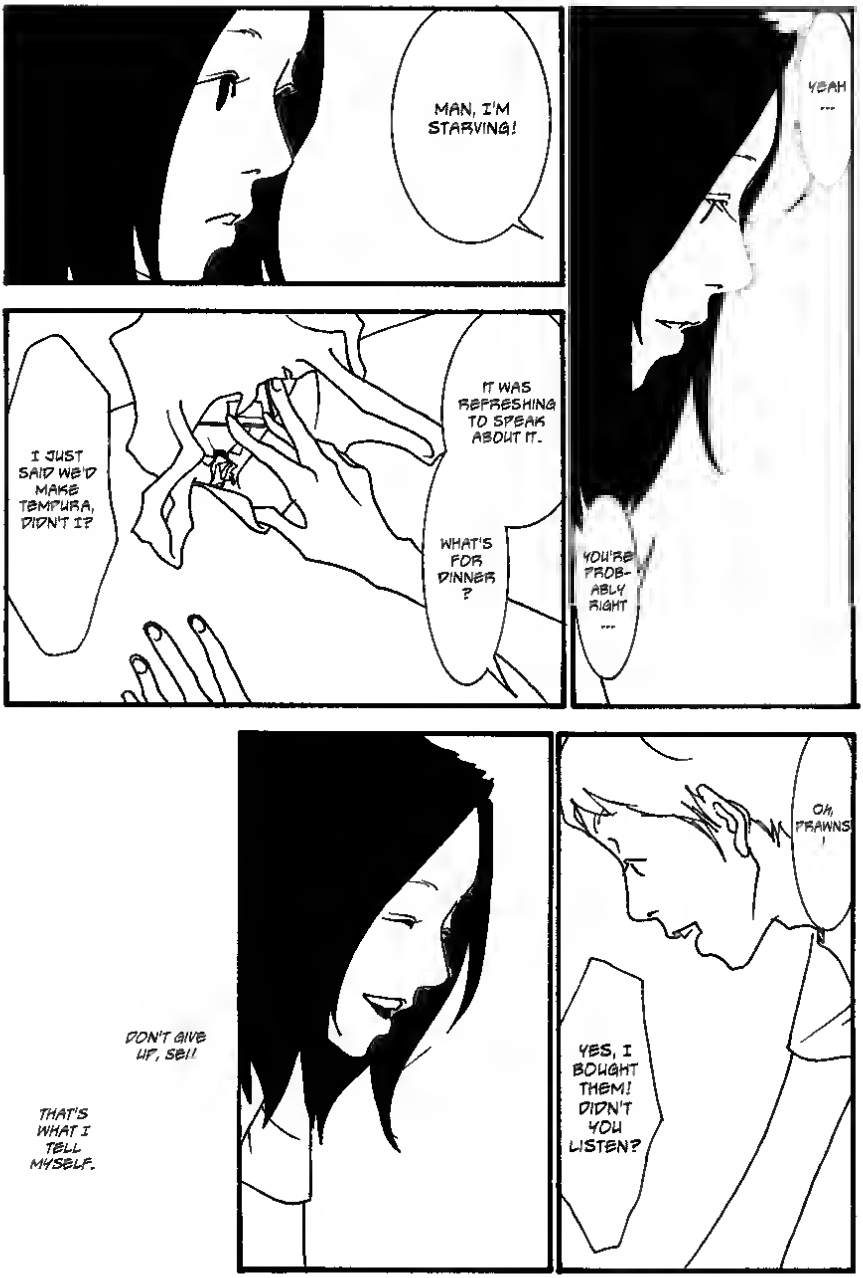

Hmph!
...
IT'S 'CAUSE YOU HAVEN'T WRAPPED YOUR MIND AROUND THAT SIMPLE CONCEPT THAT YOU CAN'T GET ANYWHERE.
MONEY, IT'S ALWAYS ABOUT THE MONEY! IS IT REALLY THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS?
AN AGENCY THAT FORCES US TO PLAY WITH A SINGER EVEN THOUGH SHE'S CRAP-...
WHO FILLS HALLS WITH A CROWD THAT DOESN'T KNOW THE FIRST THING ABOUT MUSIC...
ISN'T THAT RATHER WHAT GETS YOU NOWHERE?

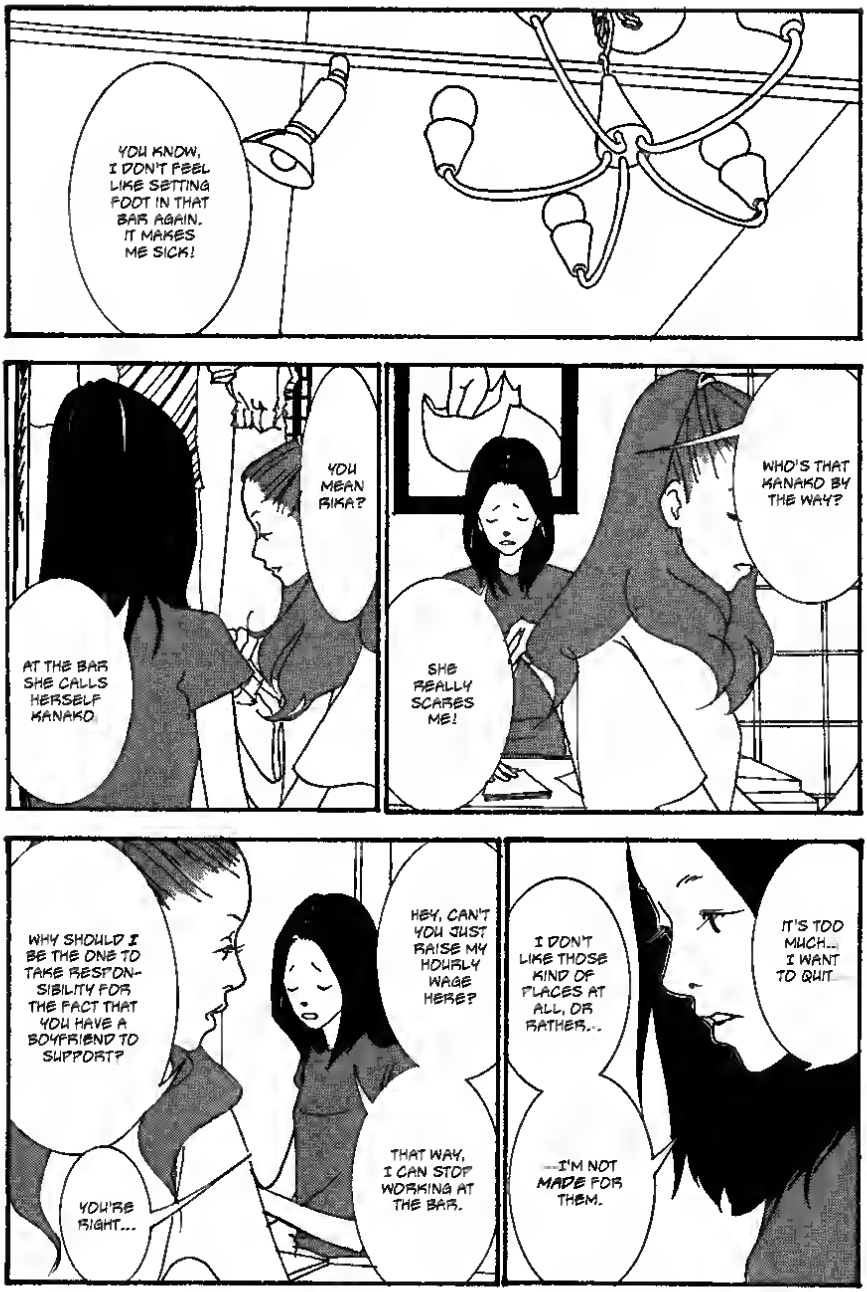
EVERYBODY THINKS LIKE THAT IN THE BEGINNING.
BUT YOU HAVE TO SWALLOW YOUR PRIDE AND DO WHAT S NECESSARY TO SURVIVE.
YOU'LL NEVER CHANGE...
LISTEN ...
YOU NEED TO GROW UP, MAN

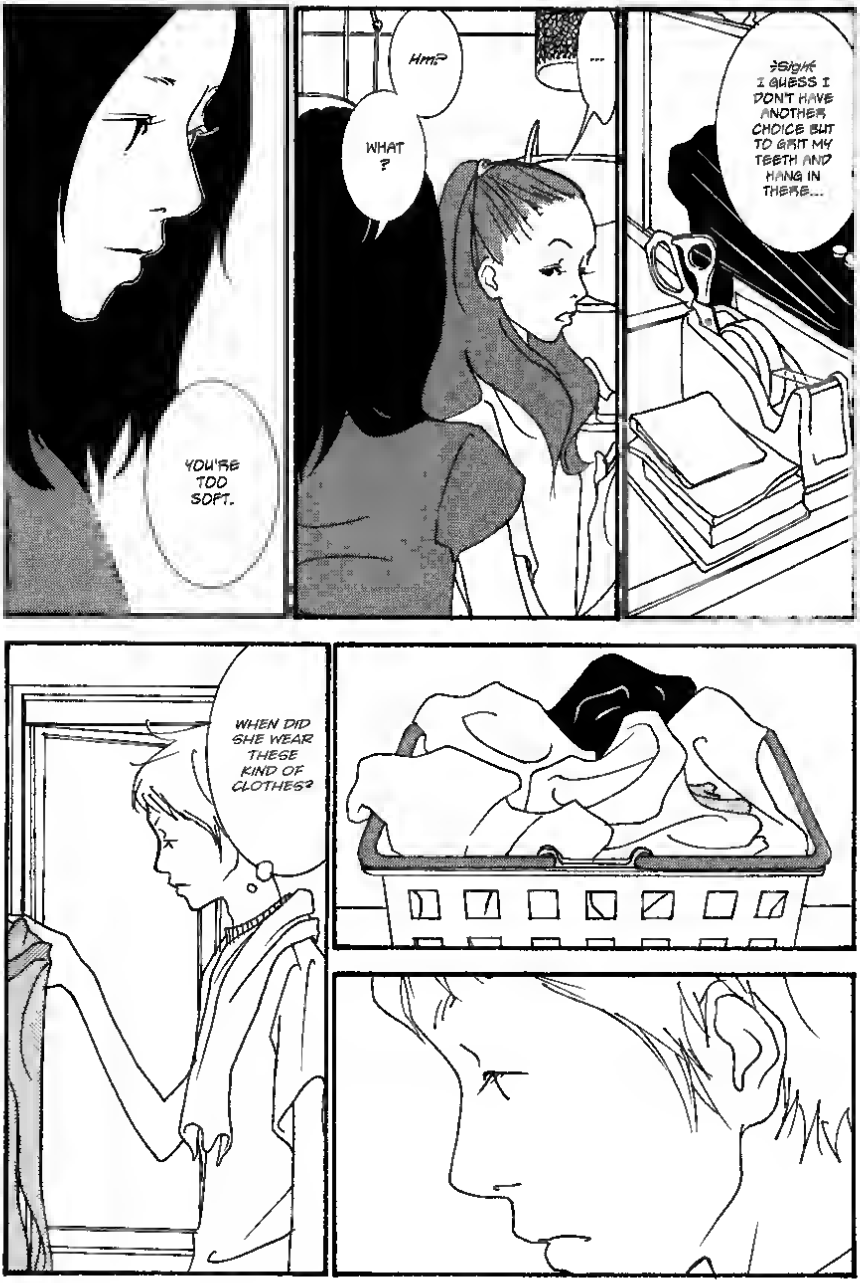

I'M HOME!
BOY, I GOT TO TELL YOU SOME-THING...
THE EGGPLANTS WERE ON SALE TODAY SO I THOUGHT WE COULD MAKE TEMPURA. BUT WHEN I BOUGHT PRAWNS AND OIL, IT ENDED UP BEING A LOT MORE EXPENSIVE THAN I THOUGHT!
SHHH
Hm?
IS SOME-THING WRONG?
HEY ...
ARE YOU ANGRY?

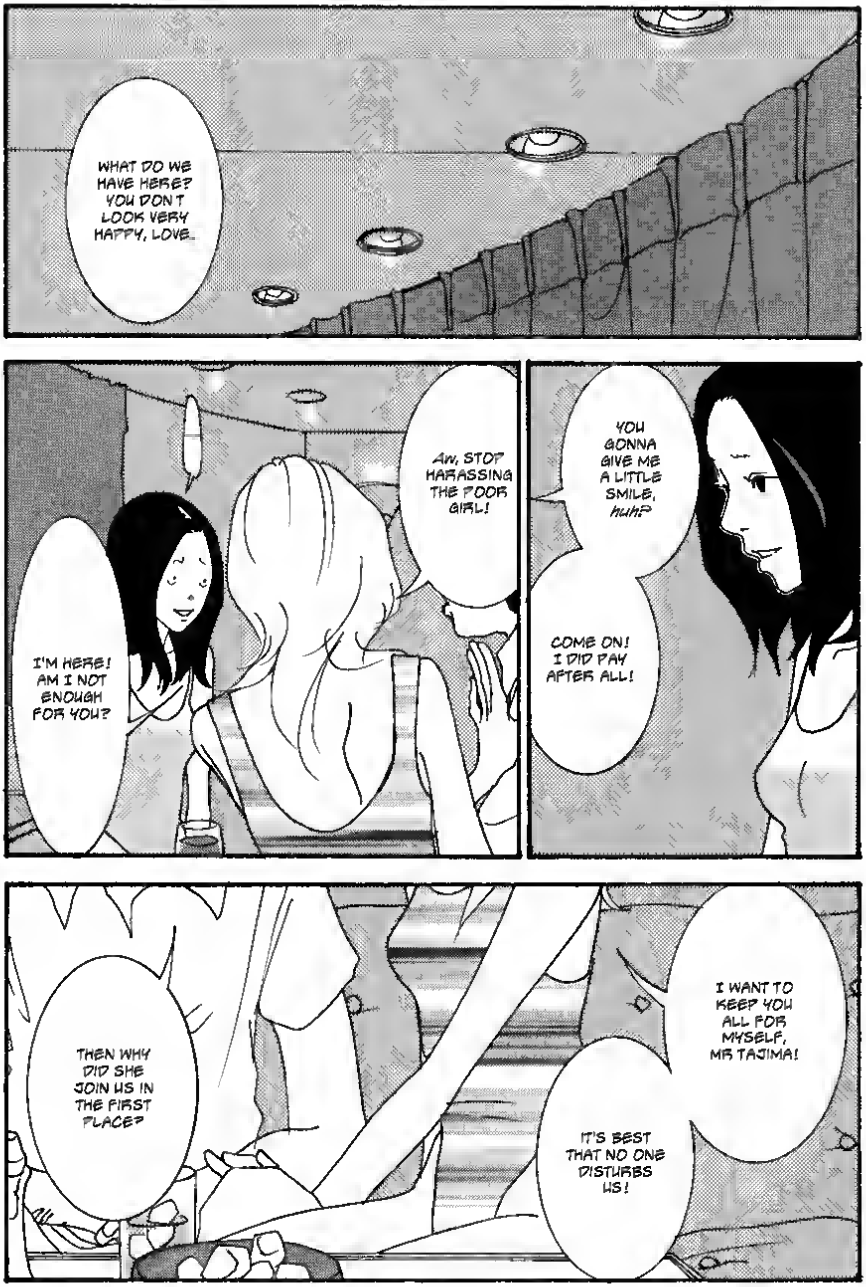

I MET HIM AT ISEYA'S.
HE CAME HERE?
I SAW TANAKA TODAY.
I THINK HE INVITED ME JUST TO FEEL SUPERIOR.
HE PAID.
DID YOU HAVE ENOUGH MONEY?
AN AGENCY SAW ONE OF OUR GIGS AND MADE HIM AN OFFER.
APPARENTLY HE LANDED HIS FIRST CONTRACT.


...
HE TOLD YOU THAT?!
SOMEONE LIKE ME MEANING SOMEONE WHO THINKS LIKE ME.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO THINK ...
HE SAID THAT SOMEONE LIKE ME WOULD NEVER MAKE IT.
BUT YOU KNOW WHAT ...
IT'S NO USE LOOKING IN THE PAST.
YOU HAVE TO MOVE FORWARD ...
BUT I REALLY LIKE THE SONGS YOU WROTE!
YEAH, I QUITE LIKE THEM MYSELF...
Ha ha ha! THAT'S ENOUGH THEN, ISN'T IT?

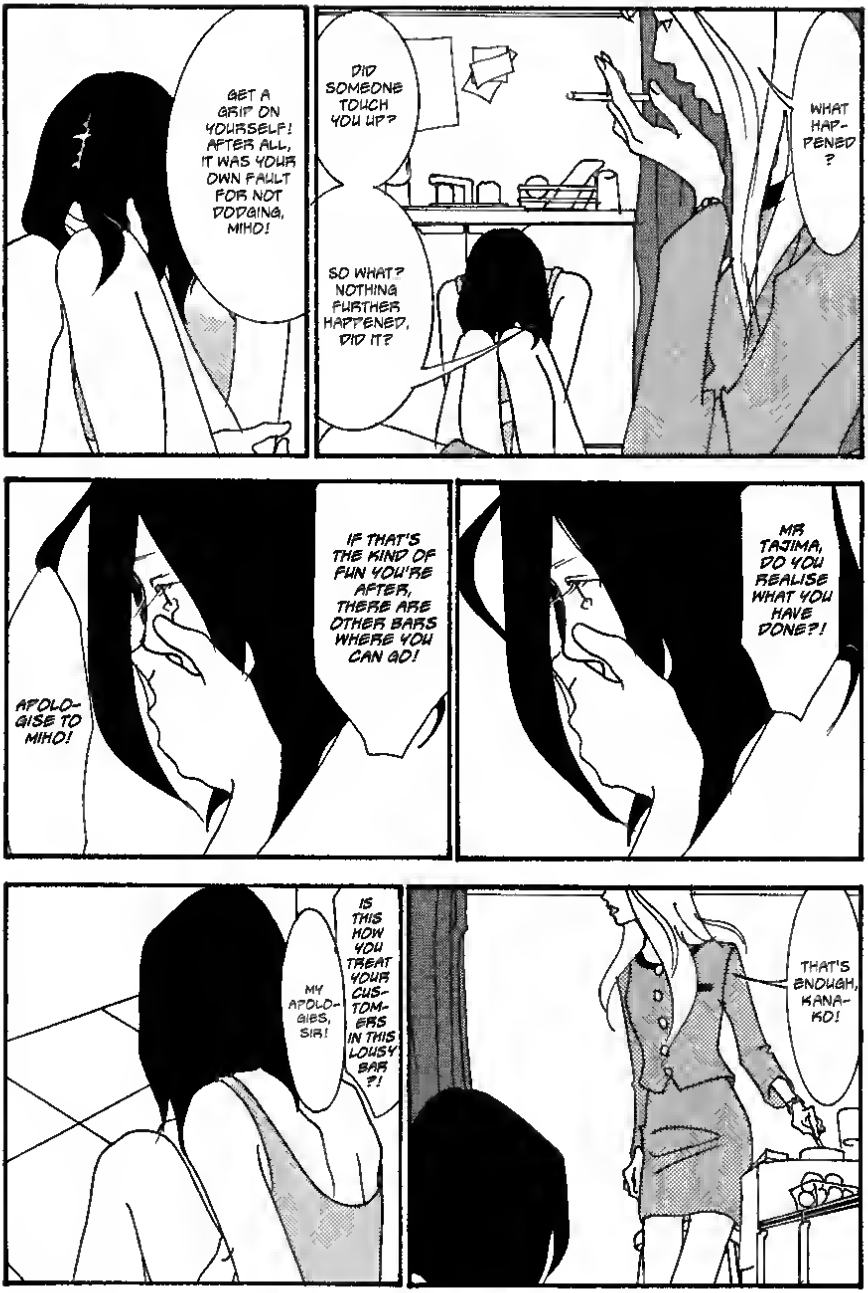

MAN, I'M STARVING!
YEAH ...
IT WAS REFRESHING TO SPEAK ABOUT IT.
I JUST SAID WE'D MAKE TEMPURA, DIDN'T I?
WHAT'S FOR DINNER ?
YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT ...
OH, PRAWNS !
YES, I BOUGHT THEM! DIDN'T YOU LISTEN?
DON'T GIVE UP, SEI!
THAT'S WHAT I TELL MYSELF.

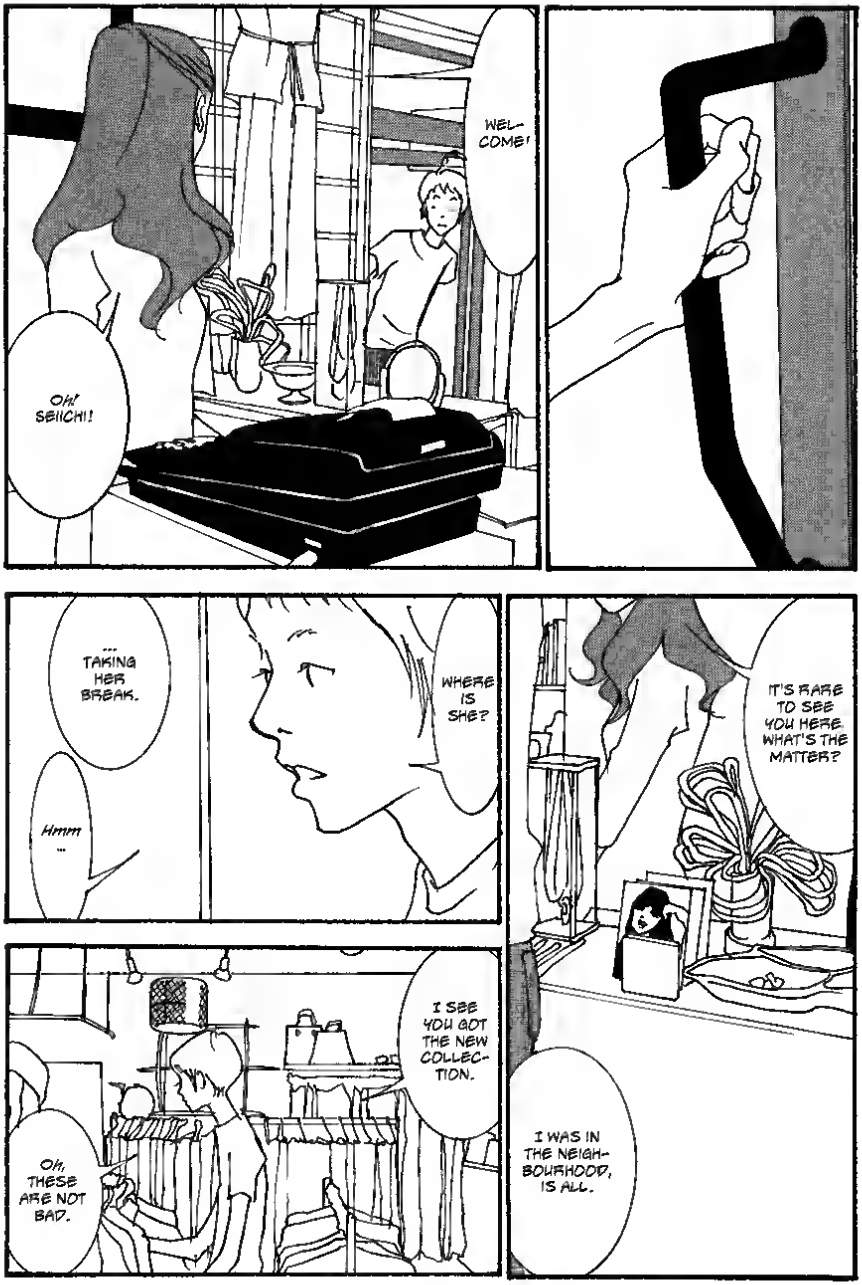

YOU KNOW, I DON'T FEEL LIKE SETTING FOOT IN THAT BAR AGAIN. IT MAKES ME SICK!
YOU MEAN RIKA?
AT THE BAR SHE CALLS HERSELF KANAKO.
WHO'S THAT KANAKO BY THE WAY?
SHE REALLY SCARES ME!
WHY SHOULD I BE THE ONE TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FACT THAT YOU HAVE A BOYFRIEND TO SUPPORT?
YOU'RE RIGHT...
HEY, CAN'T YOU JUST RAISE MY HOURLY WAGE HERE?
THAT WAY, I CAN STOP WORKING AT THE BAR.
I DON'T LIKE THOSE KIND OF PLACES AT ALL, OR RATHER...
—I'M NOT *MADE* FOR THEM.
IT'S TOO MUCH... I WANT TO QUIT.

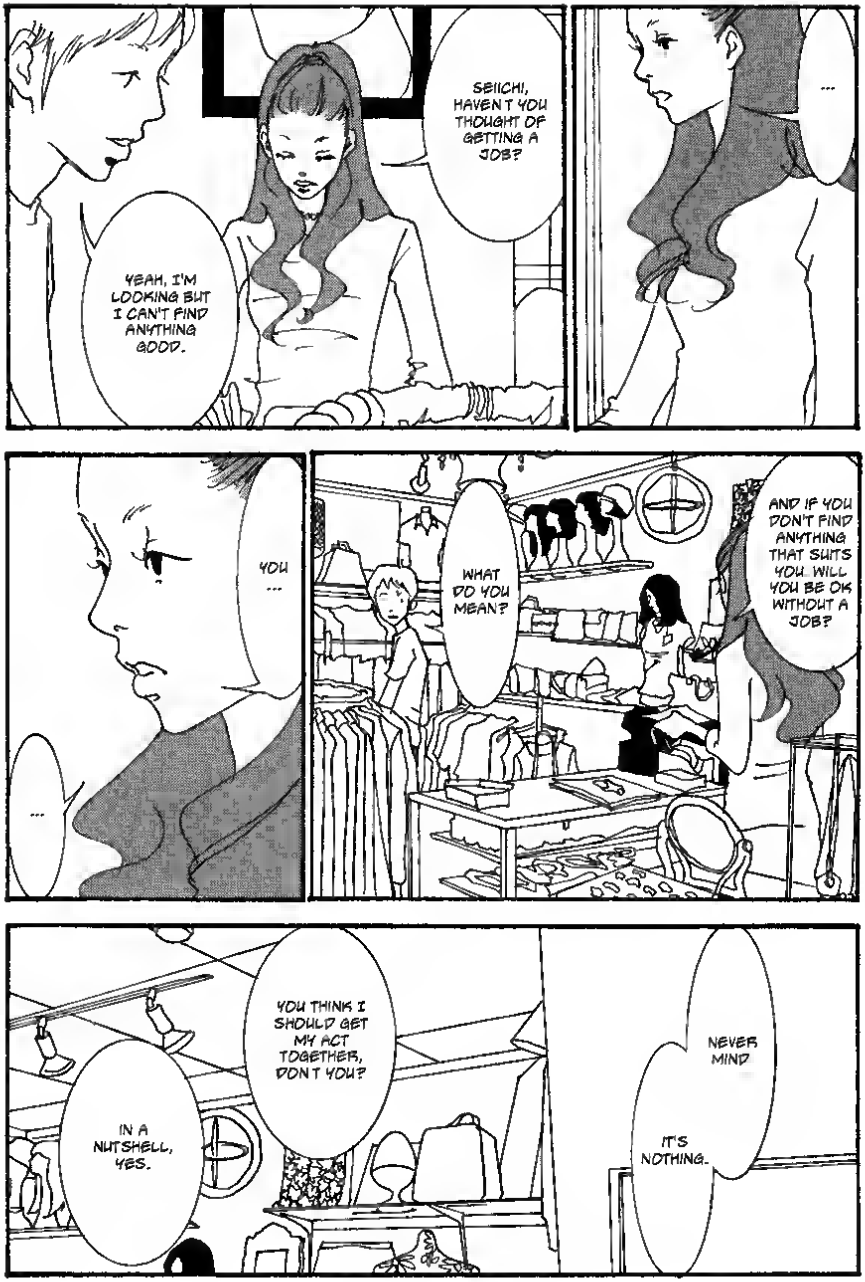

YOU'RE TOO SOFT.
WHAT ?
Hm?
...
SIGH I GUESS I DON'T HAVE ANOTHER CHOICE BUT TO GRIT MY TEETH AND HANG IN THERE...
WHEN DID SHE WEAR THESE KIND OF CLOTHES?

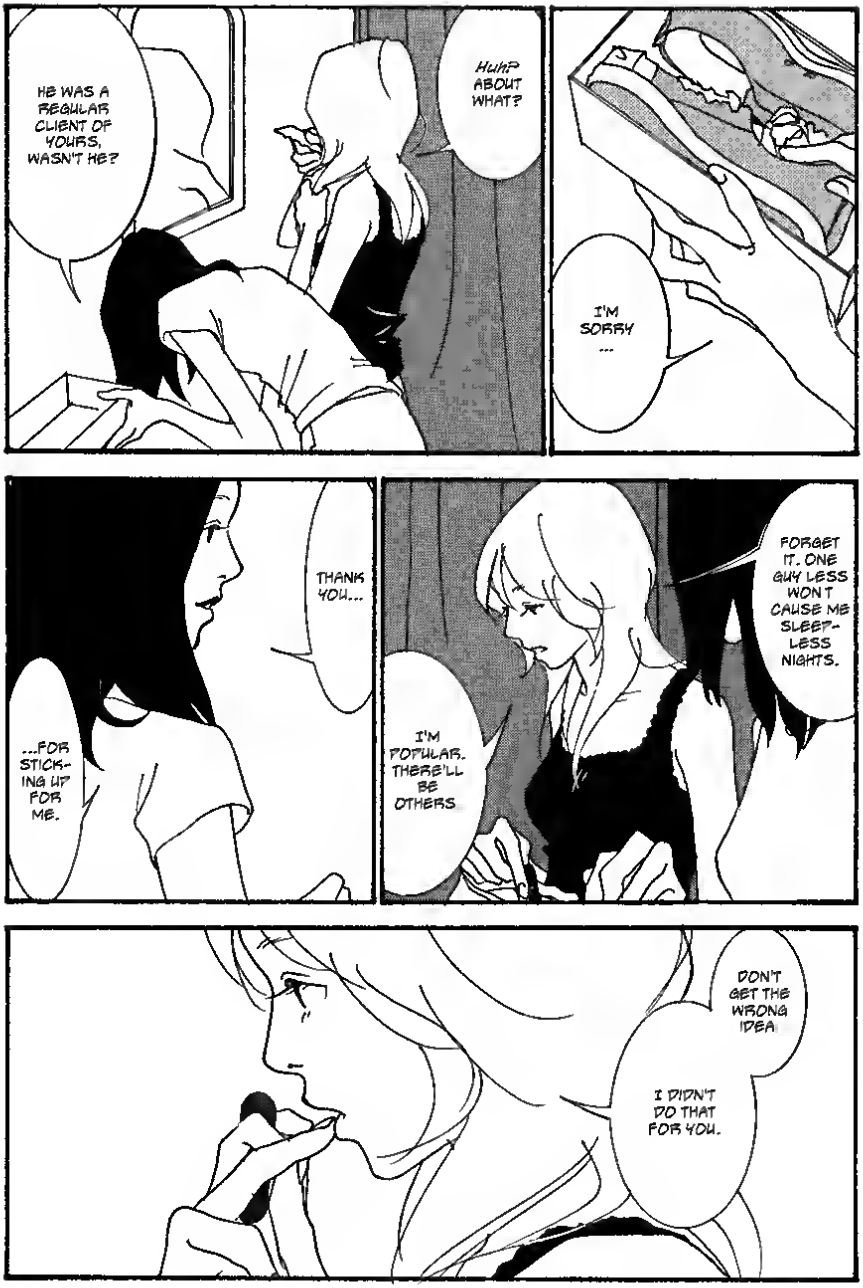

WHAT DO WE HAVE HERE? YOU DON'T LOOK VERY HAPPY, LOVE.
AW, STOP HARASSING THE POOR GIRL!
I'M HERE! AM I NOT ENOUGH FOR YOU?
YOU GONNA GIVE ME A LITTLE SMILE, HUH?
COME ON! I DID PAY AFTER ALL!
I WANT TO KEEP YOU ALL FOR MYSELF, MR TAJIMA!
IT'S BEST THAT NO ONE DISTURBS US!
THEN WHY DID SHE JOIN US IN THE FIRST PLACE?

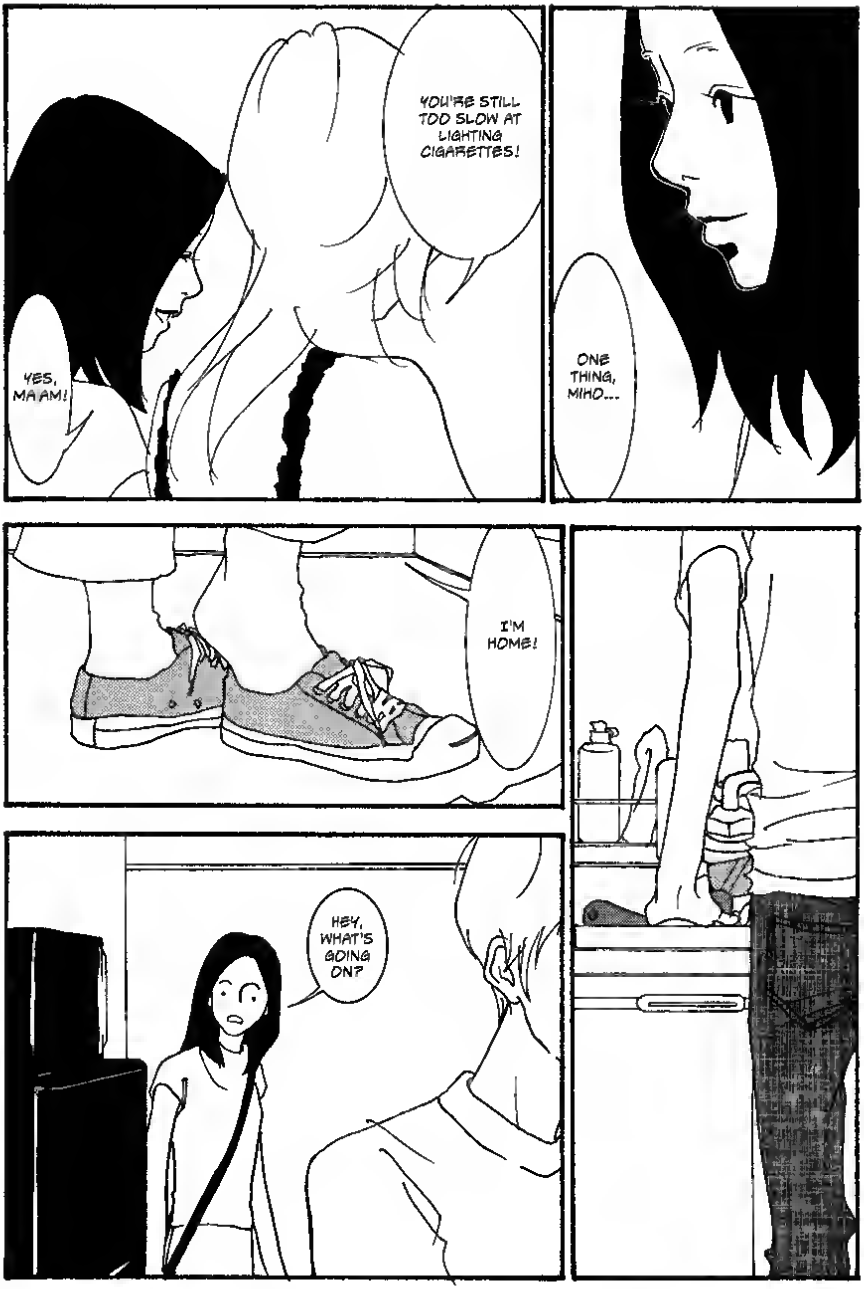
!!
HUH? NOW HOLD ON!
OR COULD IT BE...
...THAT SHE JUST WANTS ME TO TOUCH HER?
OK, I GET IT NOW! IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT...
MR TAJIMA, NO!
WHOA!
=Ho ho ho ho ho=
MIHO!
SIR!

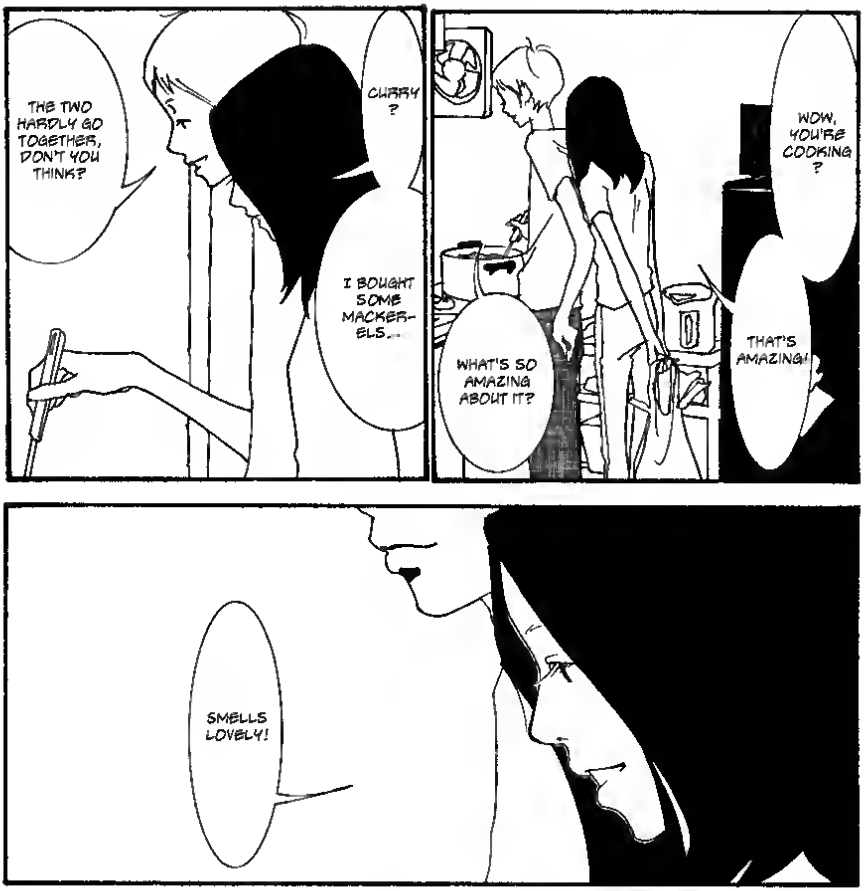

GET A GRIP ON YOURSELF! AFTER ALL, IT WAS YOUR OWN FAULT FOR NOT DODGING, MIHO!
DID SOMEONE TOUCH YOU UP?
SO WHAT? NOTHING FURTHER HAPPENED, DID IT?
WHAT HAP-PENED?
IF THAT'S THE KIND OF FUN YOU'RE AFTER, THERE ARE OTHER BARS WHERE YOU CAN GO!
APOLO-GISE TO MIHO!
MR TAJIMA, DO YOU REALISE WHAT YOU HAVE DONE?!
IS THIS HOW YOU TREAT YOUR CUS-TOMERS IN THIS LOUSY BAR?!
MY APOLO-GIES, SIR!
THAT'S ENOUGH, KANA-KO!


WELCOME!
OH! SEIICHI!
...TAKING HER BREAK.
WHERE IS SHE?
Hmm...
IT'S RARE TO SEE YOU HERE. WHAT'S THE MATTER?
I SEE YOU GOT THE NEW COLLECTION.
OH, THESE ARE NOT BAD.
I WAS IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD, IS ALL.


SEIICHI, HAVEN'T YOU THOUGHT OF GETTING A JOB?
YEAH, I'M LOOKING BUT I CAN'T FIND ANYTHING GOOD.
...
YOU ...
...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
AND IF YOU DON'T FIND ANYTHING THAT SUITS YOU. WILL YOU BE OK WITHOUT A JOB?
YOU THINK I SHOULD GET MY ACT TOGETHER, DON'T YOU?
IN A NUTSHELL, YES.
NEVER MIND
IT'S NOTHING.


HE WAS A REGULAR CLIENT OF YOURS, WASN'T HE?
HUH? ABOUT WHAT?
I'M SORRY ...
THANK YOU...
...FOR STICK-ING UP FOR ME.
I'M POPULAR. THERE'LL BE OTHERS.
FORGET IT. ONE GUY LESS WON'T CAUSE ME SLEEP-LESS NIGHTS.
DON'T GET THE WRONG IDEA.
I DIDN'T DO THAT FOR YOU.


YOU'RE STILL TOO SLOW AT LIGHTING CIGARETTES!
YES, MA'AM!
ONE THING, MIHO...
I'M HOME!
HEY, WHAT'S GOING ON?

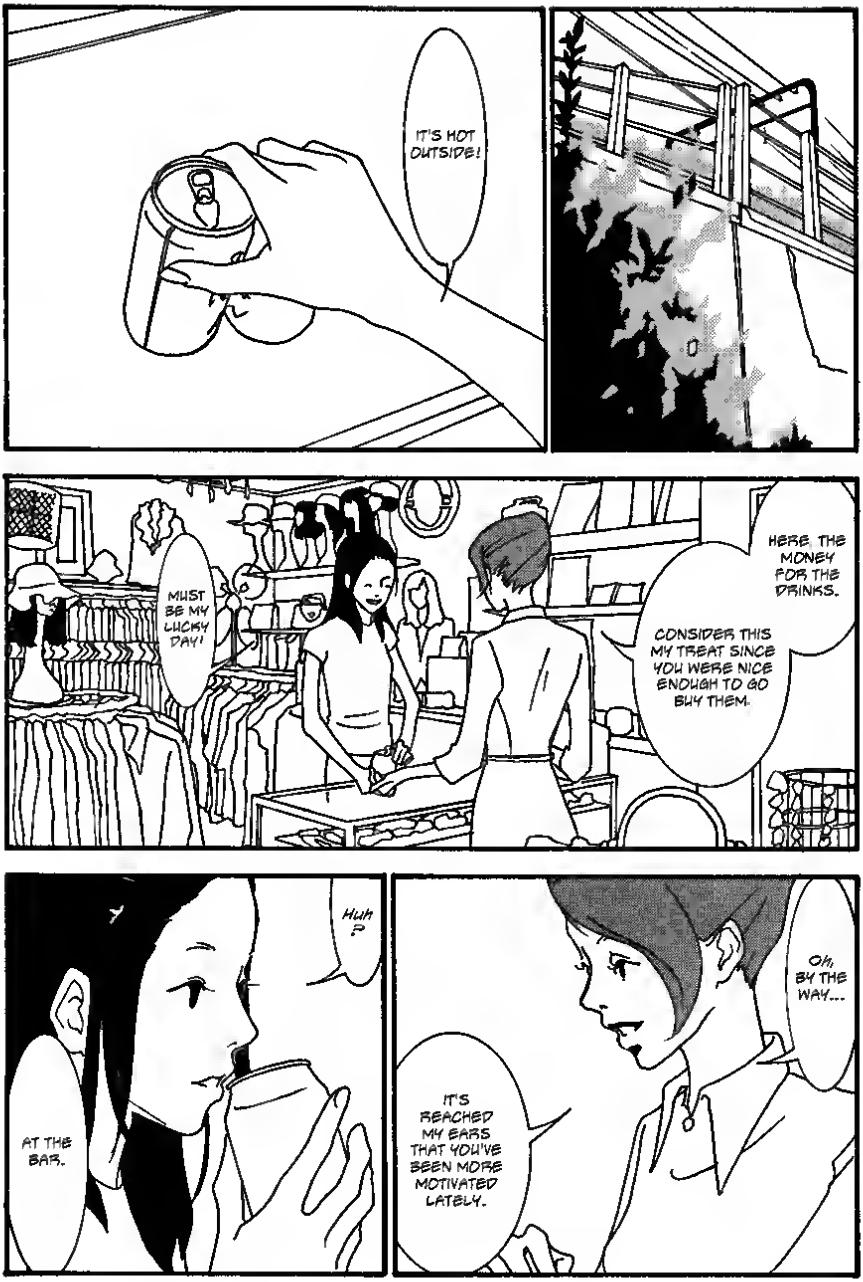


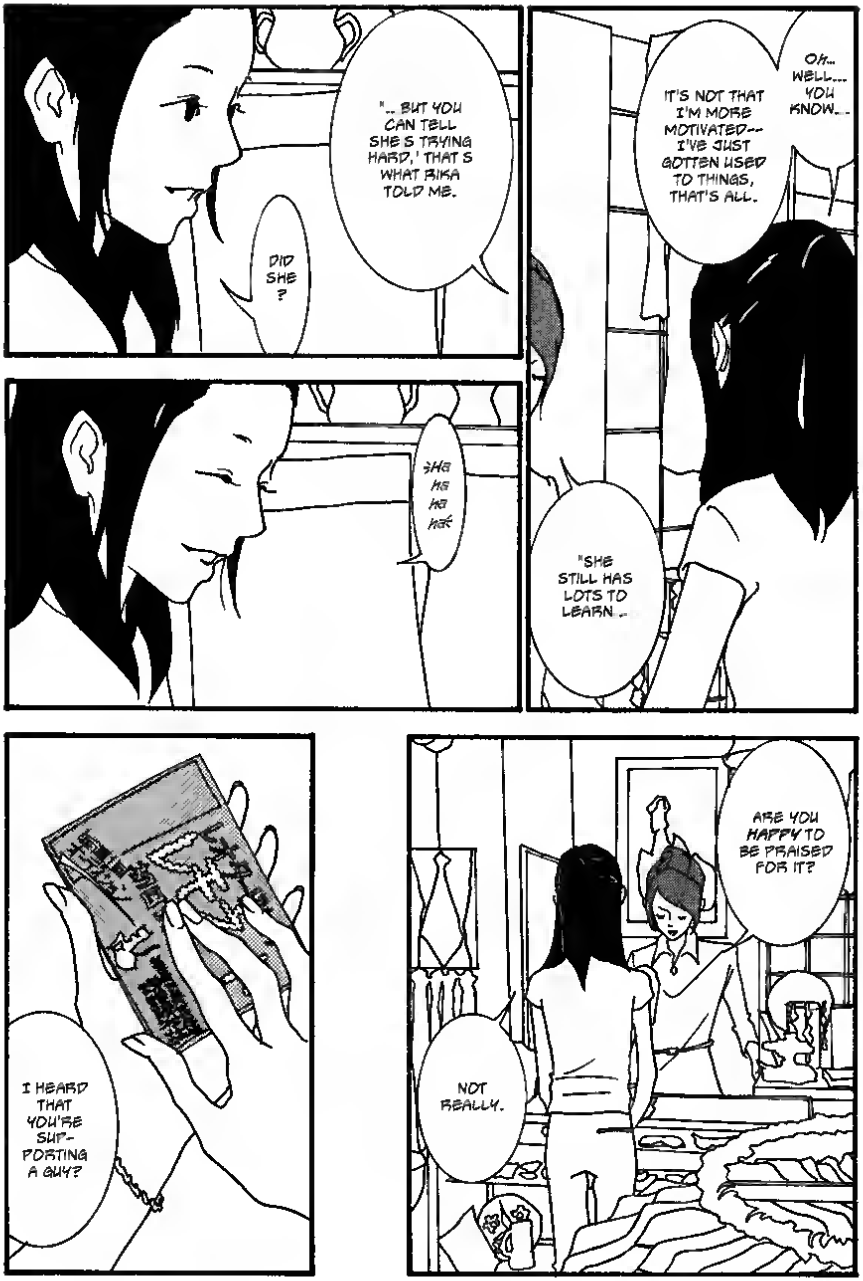
SE! PLAYED VIDEO GAMES UNTIL LATE AT NIGHT, BUT I WAS SO TIRED THAT I FELL ASLEEP INSTANTLY.

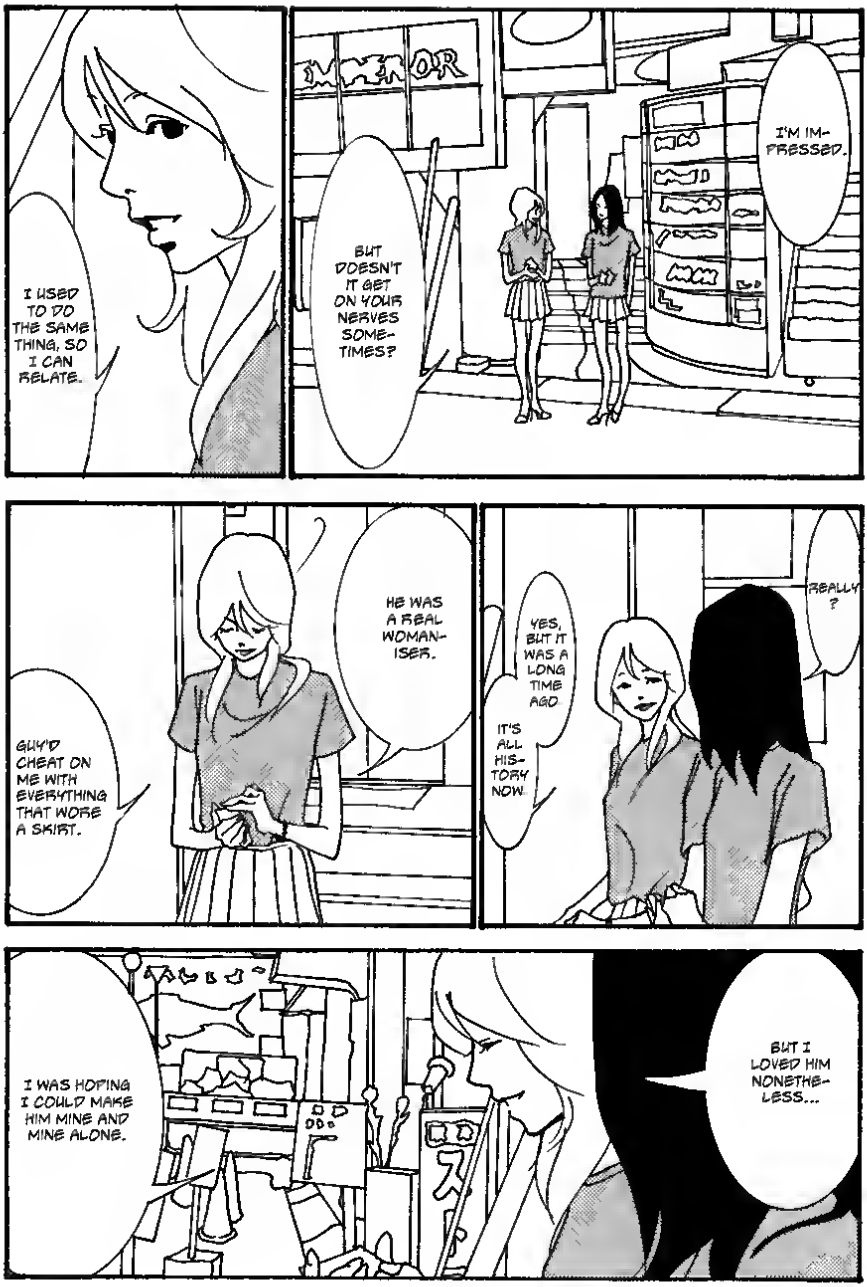
"DO YOU KNOW THAT I CAME BY THE STORE TODAY?" HE ASKED. "YOU WENT THERE?" I REPLIED, TO WHICH HE SAID: "SHOULDN'T YOU SAY 'YOU CAME?'?"

THAT DAY I ACTUALLY FELT QUITE NICE COMING HOME, AND SE! HAD JUST PREPARED CURRY.

Chapter 3

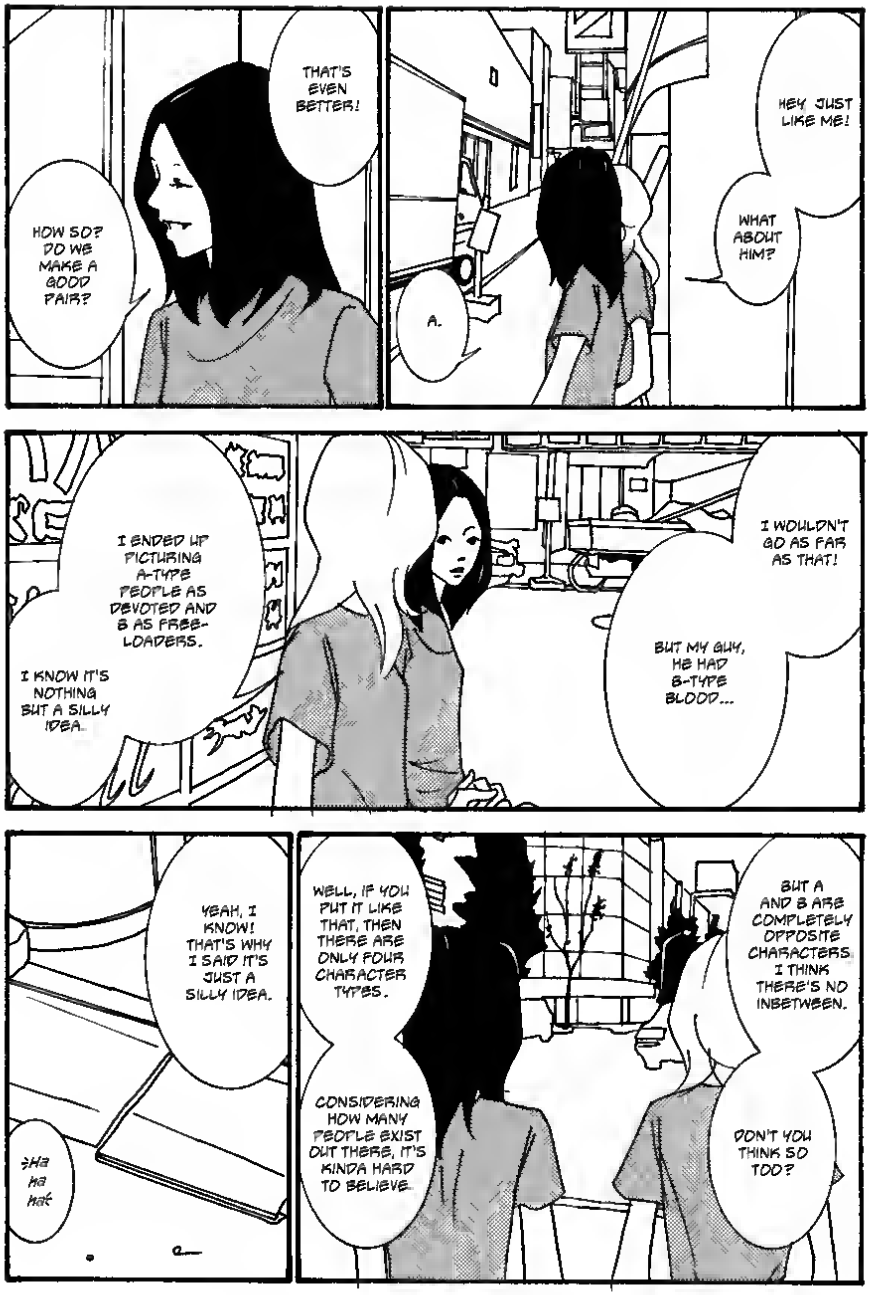

IT'S HOT OUTSIDE!
MUST BE MY LUCKY DAY!
HERE. THE MONEY FOR THE DRINKS.
CONSIDER THIS MY TREAT SINCE YOU WERE NICE ENOUGH TO GO BUY THEM.
HUH?
AT THE BAR.
OH, BY THE WAY...
IT'S REACHED MY EARS THAT YOU'VE BEEN MORE MOTIVATED LATELY.

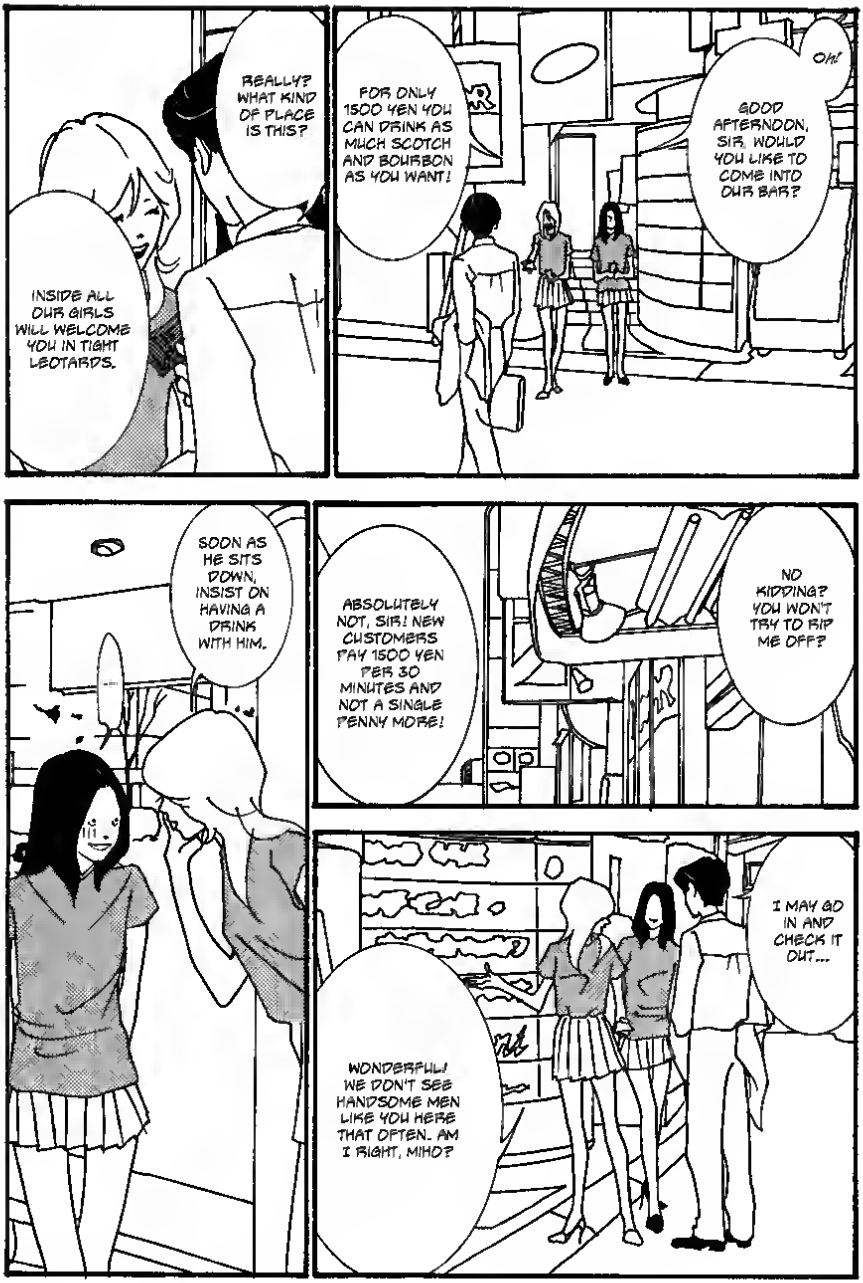

"... BUT YOU CAN TELL SHE'S TRYING HARD,' THAT'S WHAT RIKA TOLD ME.
DID SHE?
OH... WELL... YOU KNOW...
IT'S NOT THAT I'M MORE MOTIVATED-- I'VE JUST GOTTEN USED TO THINGS, THAT'S ALL.
"SHE STILL HAS LOTS TO LEARN..
SHE HA HA HA!
I HEARD THAT YOU'RE SUP-PORTING A GUY?
ARE YOU HAPPY TO BE PRAISED FOR IT?
NOT REALLY.

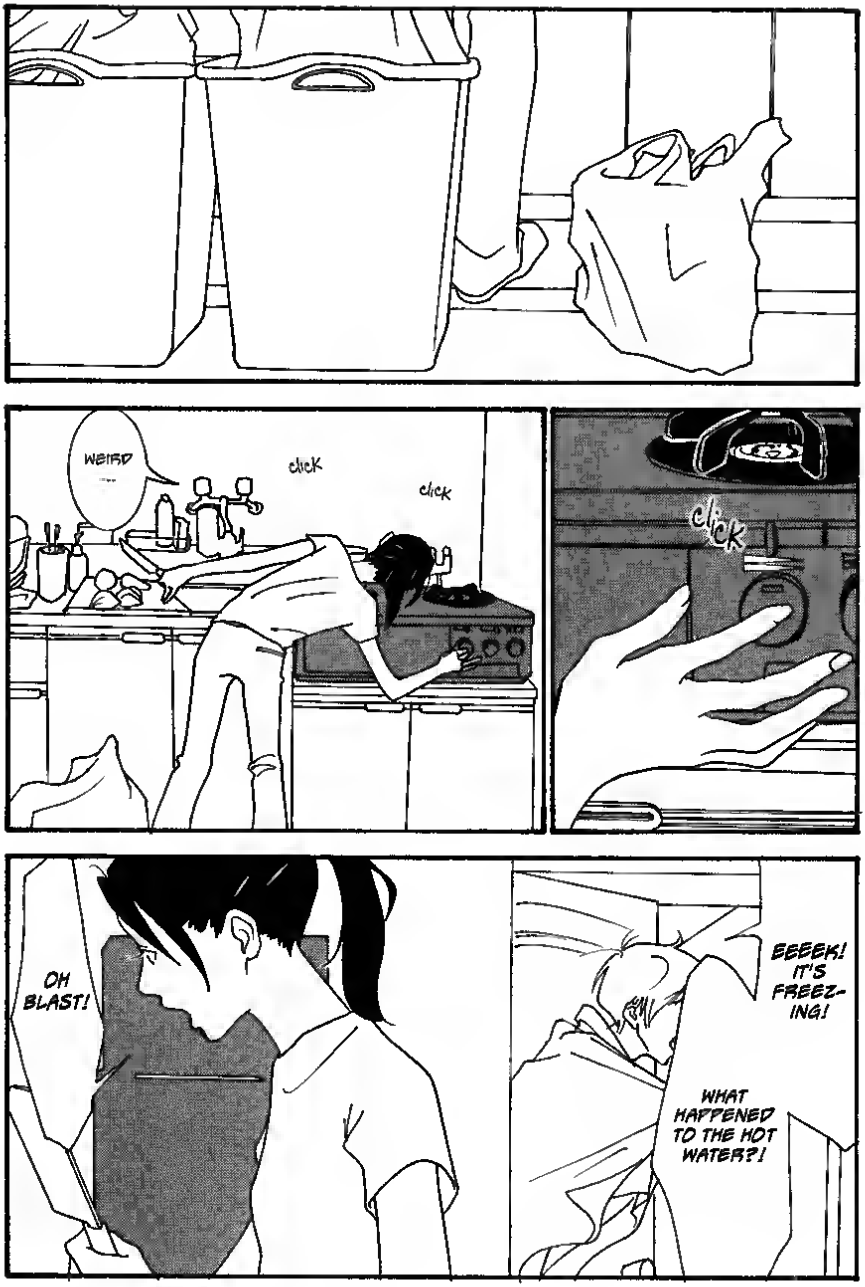

I USED TO DO THE SAME THING, SO I CAN RELATE.
BUT DOESN'T IT GET ON YOUR NERVES SOMETIMES?
I'M IMPRESSED.
HE WAS A REAL WOMANISER.
GUY'D CHEAT ON ME WITH EVERYTHING THAT WORE A SKIRT.
YES, BUT IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO
IT'S ALL HISTORY NOW.
REALLY?
I WAS HOPING I COULD MAKE HIM MINE AND MINE ALONE.
BUT I LOVED HIM NONETHELESS...

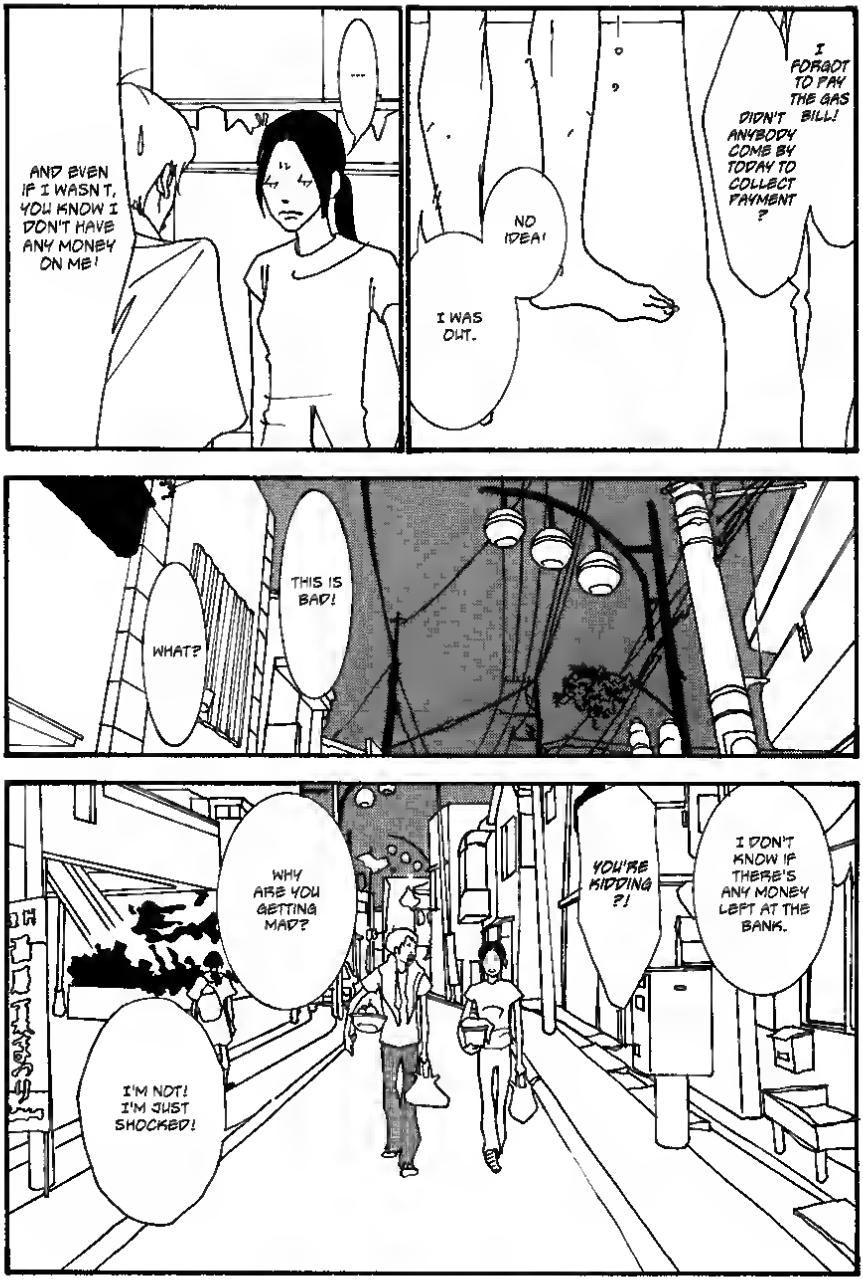
I THOUGHT THAT IF I MADE LIFE EASIER FOR HIM HE'D BECOME DEPENDENT ON ME.
BUT EVENTUALLY I TOLD MYSELF THAT IT WAS ALL ABOUT MONEY.
AND THEN, WHO KNOWS ---
I FOUND IT IDIOTIC THE WAY I DEVOTED MYSELF TO HIM AS IF HE WERE THE ONLY GUY ON EARTH.
PRETTY MUCH ---
MIHO, WHICH BLOOD GROUP ARE YOU?
HUH?
A.

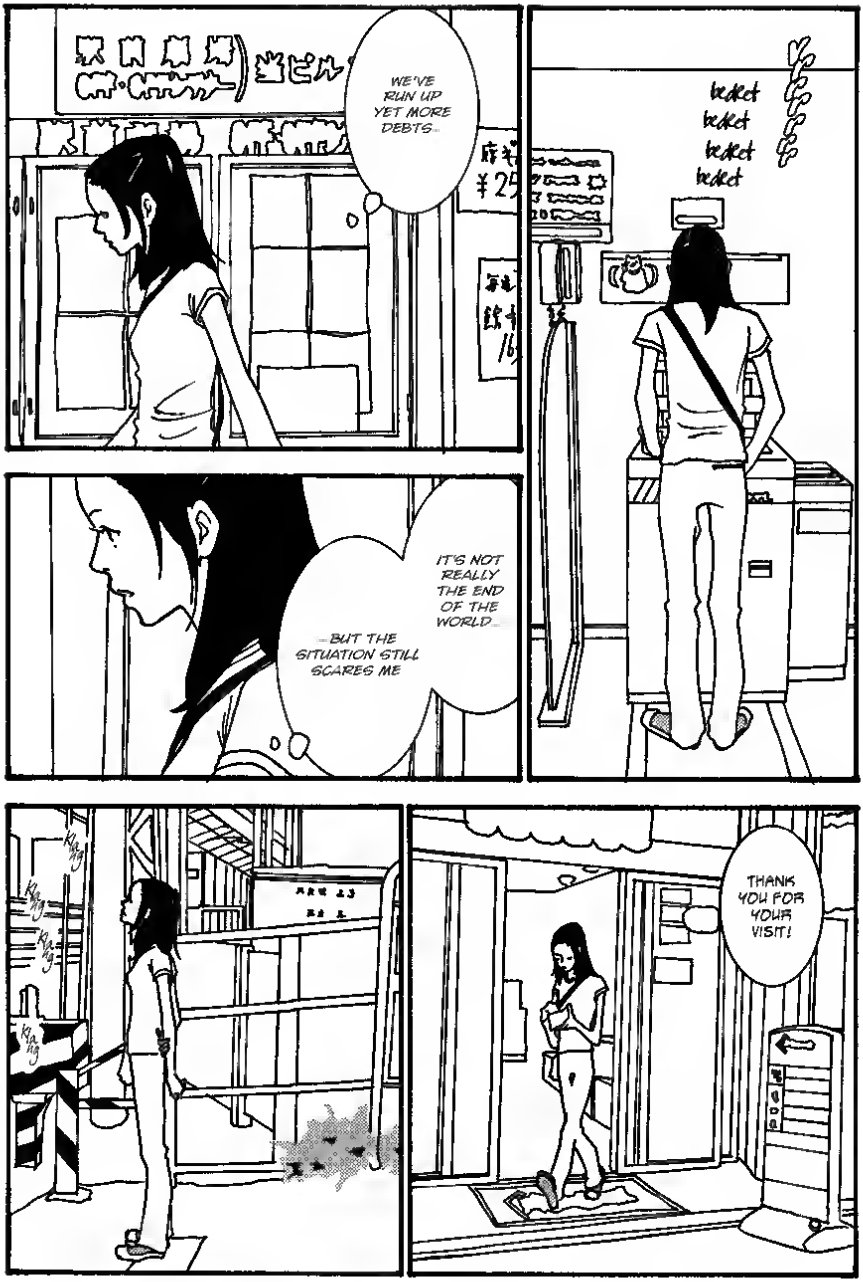
YOU SAID ---
...IT WAS ALL HISTORY--- IS IT OVER WITH HIM?
JUST LIKE YOU, MIHO.
THAT'S WHY I STARTED WORKING AS A HOSTESS ---

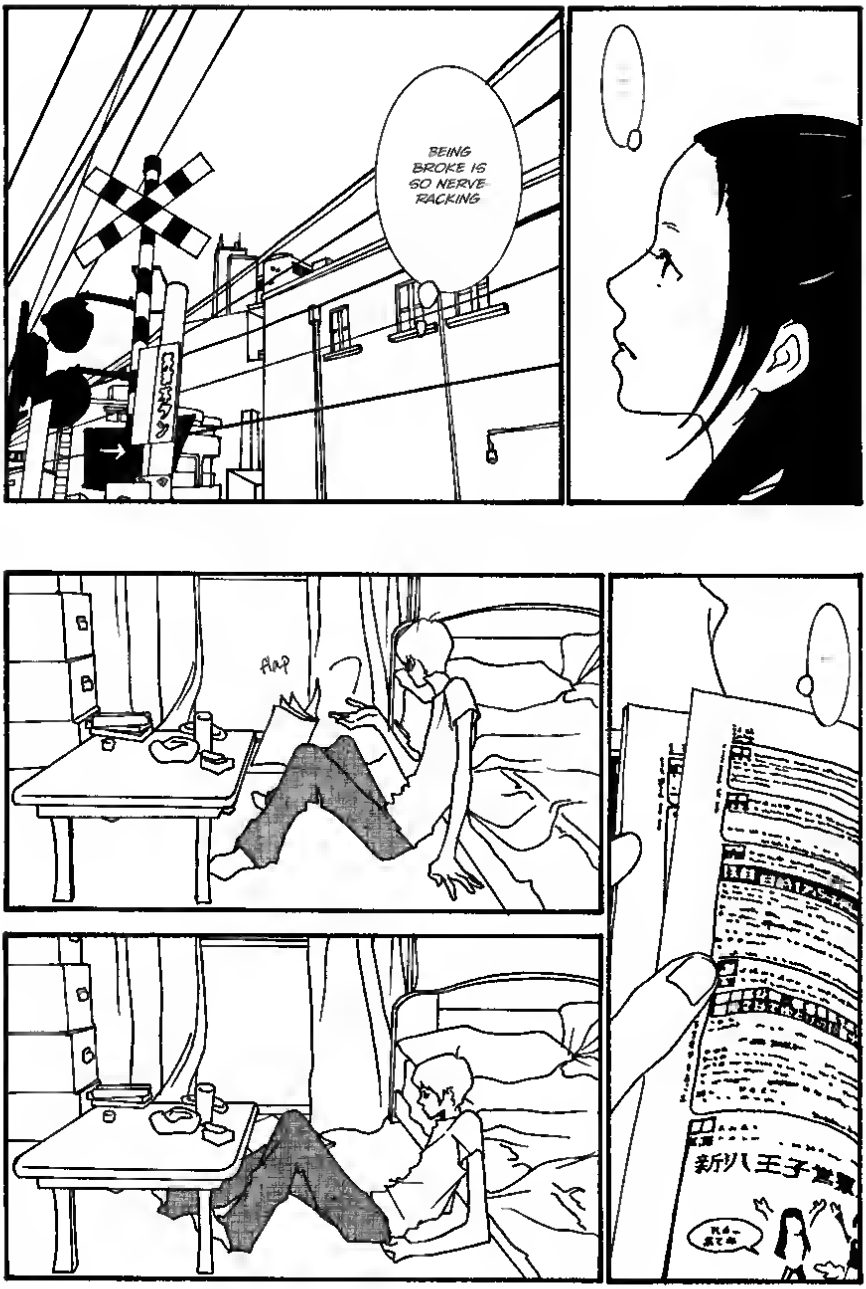

THAT'S EVEN BETTER!
HOW SO? DO WE MAKE A GOOD PAIR?
HEY, JUST LIKE ME!
WHAT ABOUT HIM?
A.
I ENDED UP PICTURING A-TYPE PEOPLE AS DEVOTED AND B AS FREE-LOADERS.
I KNOW IT'S NOTHING BUT A SILLY IDEA.
I WOULDN'T GO AS FAR AS THAT!
BUT MY GUY, HE HAD B-TYPE BLOOD...
YEAH, I KNOW! THAT'S WHY I SAID IT'S JUST A SILLY IDEA.
HA HA HA!
WELL, IF YOU PUT IT LIKE THAT, THEN THERE ARE ONLY FOUR CHARACTER TYPES.
CONSIDERING HOW MANY PEOPLE EXIST OUT THERE, IT'S KINDA HARD TO BELIEVE.
BUT A AND B ARE COMPLETELY OPPOSITE CHARACTERS. I THINK THERE'S NO INBETWEEN.
DON'T YOU THINK SO TOO?

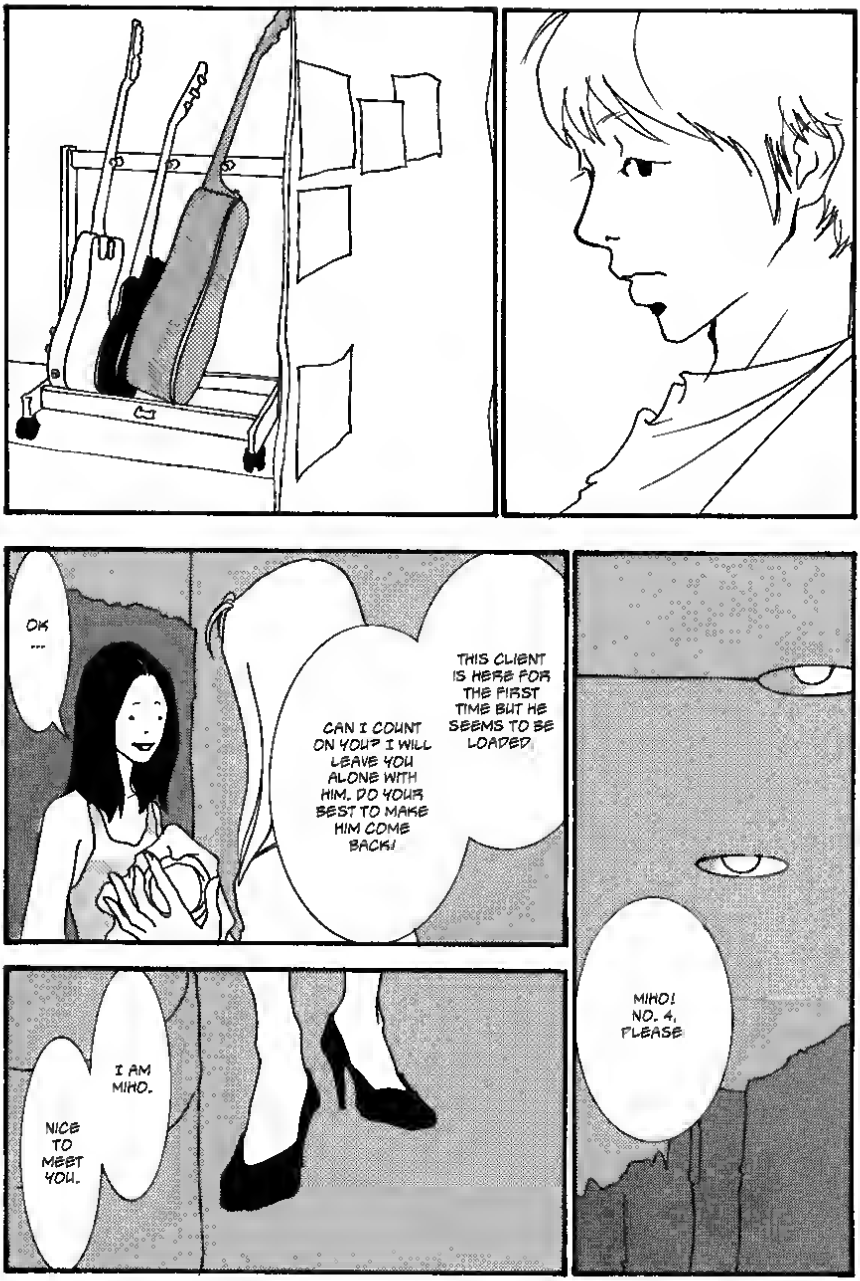

REALLY? WHAT KIND OF PLACE IS THIS?
INSIDE ALL OUR GIRLS WILL WELCOME YOU IN TIGHT LEOTARDS.
FOR ONLY 1500 YEN YOU CAN DRINK AS MUCH SCOTCH AND BOURBON AS YOU WANT!
OH!
GOOD AFTERNOON, SIR. WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME INTO OUR BAR?
SOON AS HE SITS DOWN, INSIST ON HAVING A DRINK WITH HIM.
ABSOLUTELY NOT, SIR! NEW CUSTOMERS PAY 1500 YEN PER 30 MINUTES AND NOT A SINGLE PENNY MORE!
NO KIDDING? YOU WON'T TRY TO RIP ME OFF?
I MAY GO IN AND CHECK IT OUT...
WONDERFUL! WE DON'T SEE HANDSOME MEN LIKE YOU HERE THAT OFTEN. AM I RIGHT, MIHO?

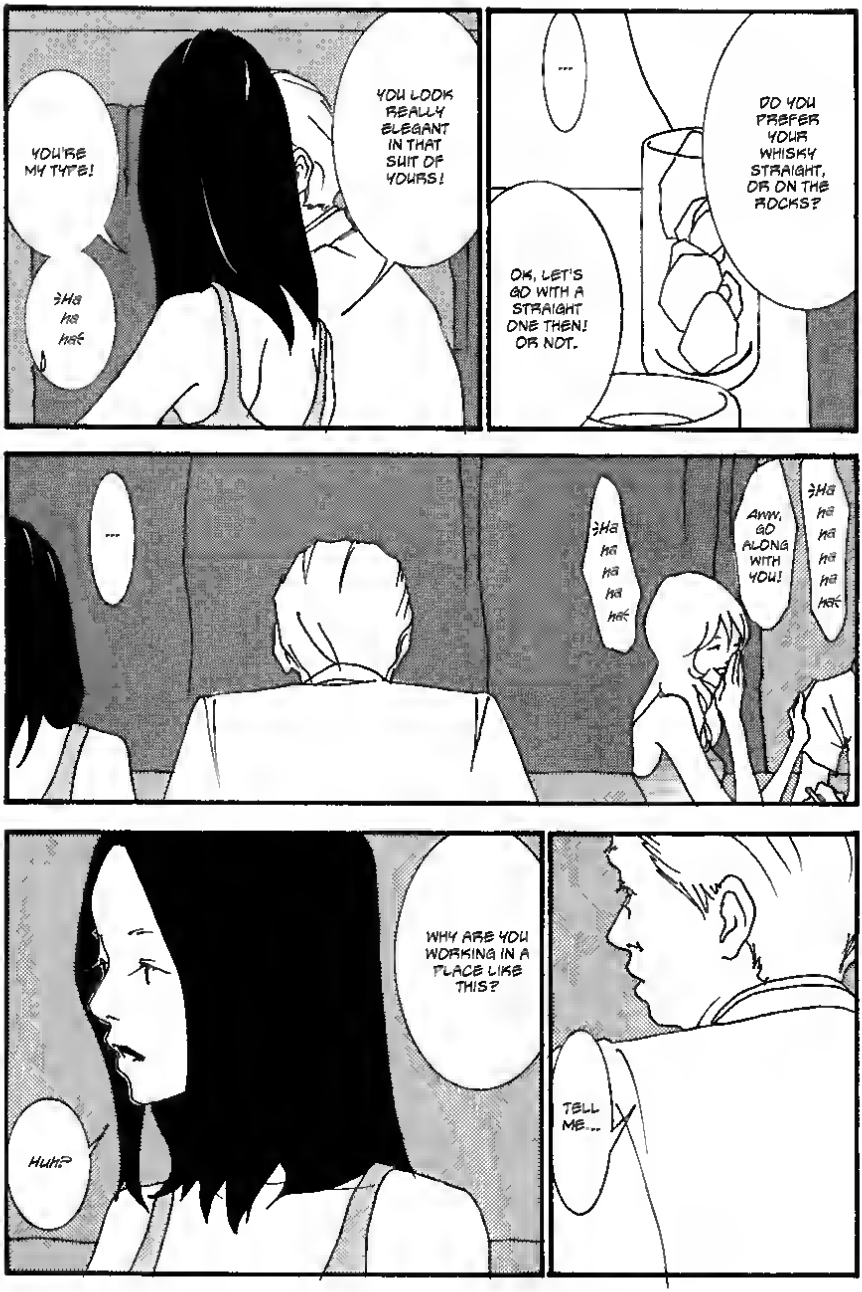

WEIRD
click
click
click
OH BLAST!
EEEEK! IT'S FREEZ-ING!
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE HOT WATER?!

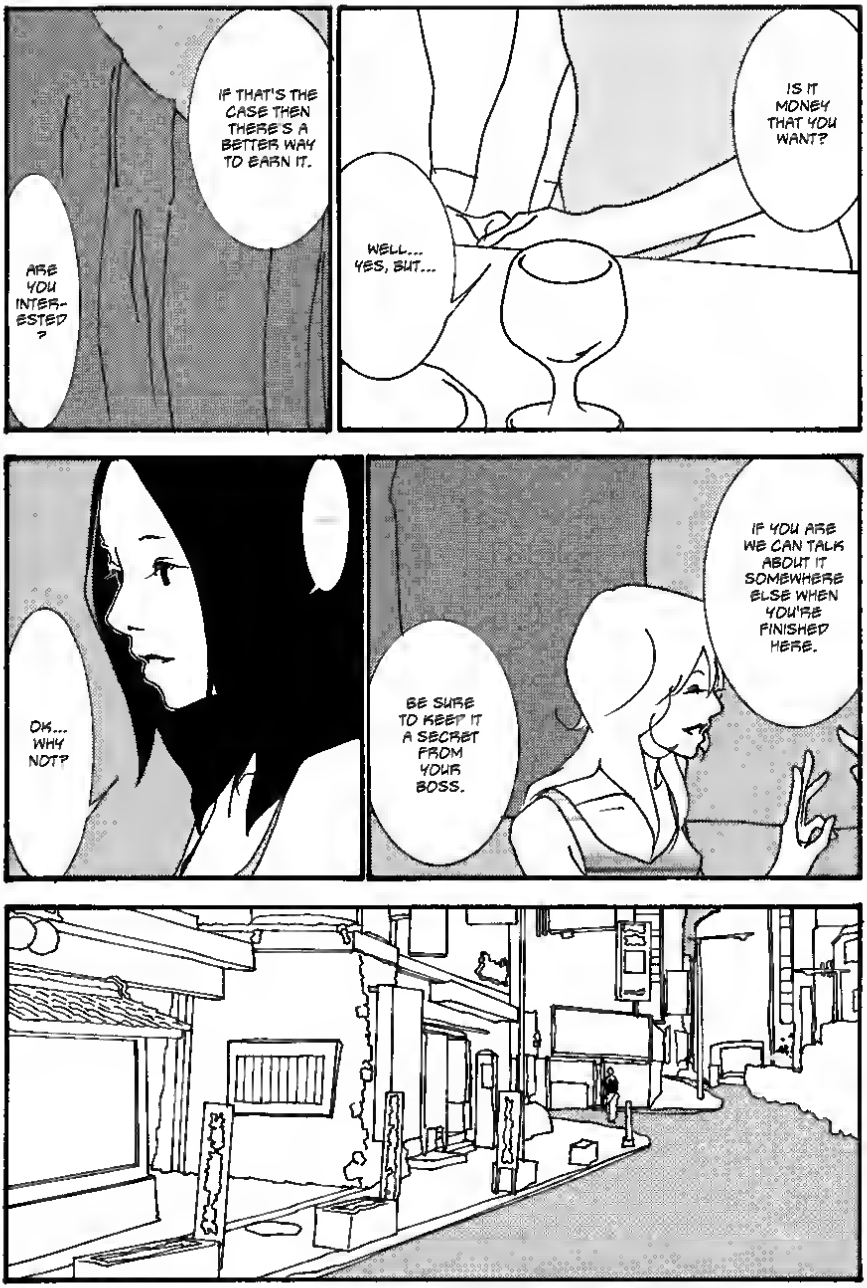

...
AND EVEN IF I WASN'T, YOU KNOW I DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY ON ME!
I FORGOT TO PAY THE GAS BILL!
DIDN'T ANYBODY COME BY TODAY TO COLLECT PAYMENT?
NO IDEA!
I WAS OUT.
THIS IS BAD!
WHAT?
WHY ARE YOU GETTING MAD?
YOU'RE KIDDING?!
I DON'T KNOW IF THERE'S ANY MONEY LEFT AT THE BANK.
I'M NOT! I'M JUST SHOCKED!

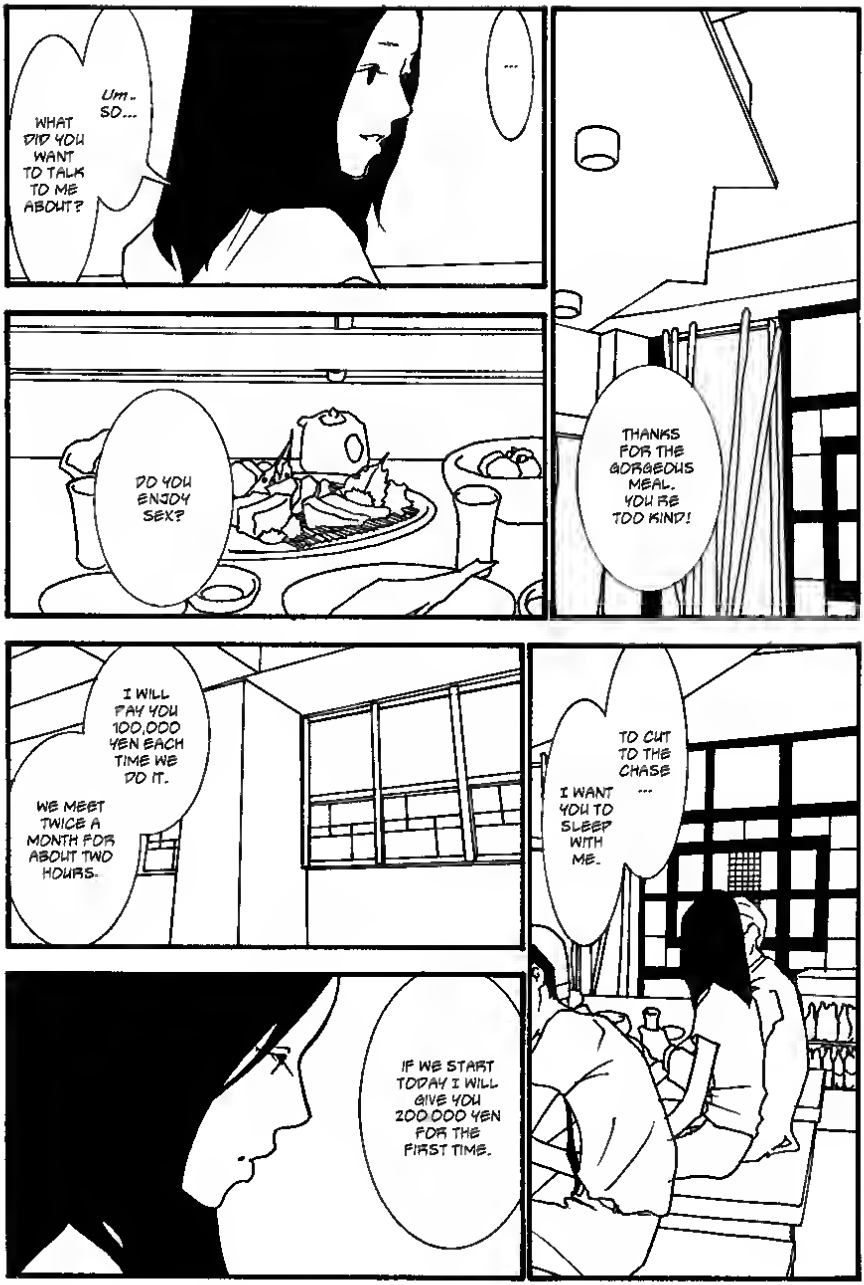

WE'VE RUN UP YET MORE DEBTS...
beep! beep! beep! beep!
IT'S NOT REALLY THE END OF THE WORLD...
...BUT THE SITUATION STILL SCARES ME
Kung Kung Kung Kung
THANK YOU FOR YOUR VISIT!

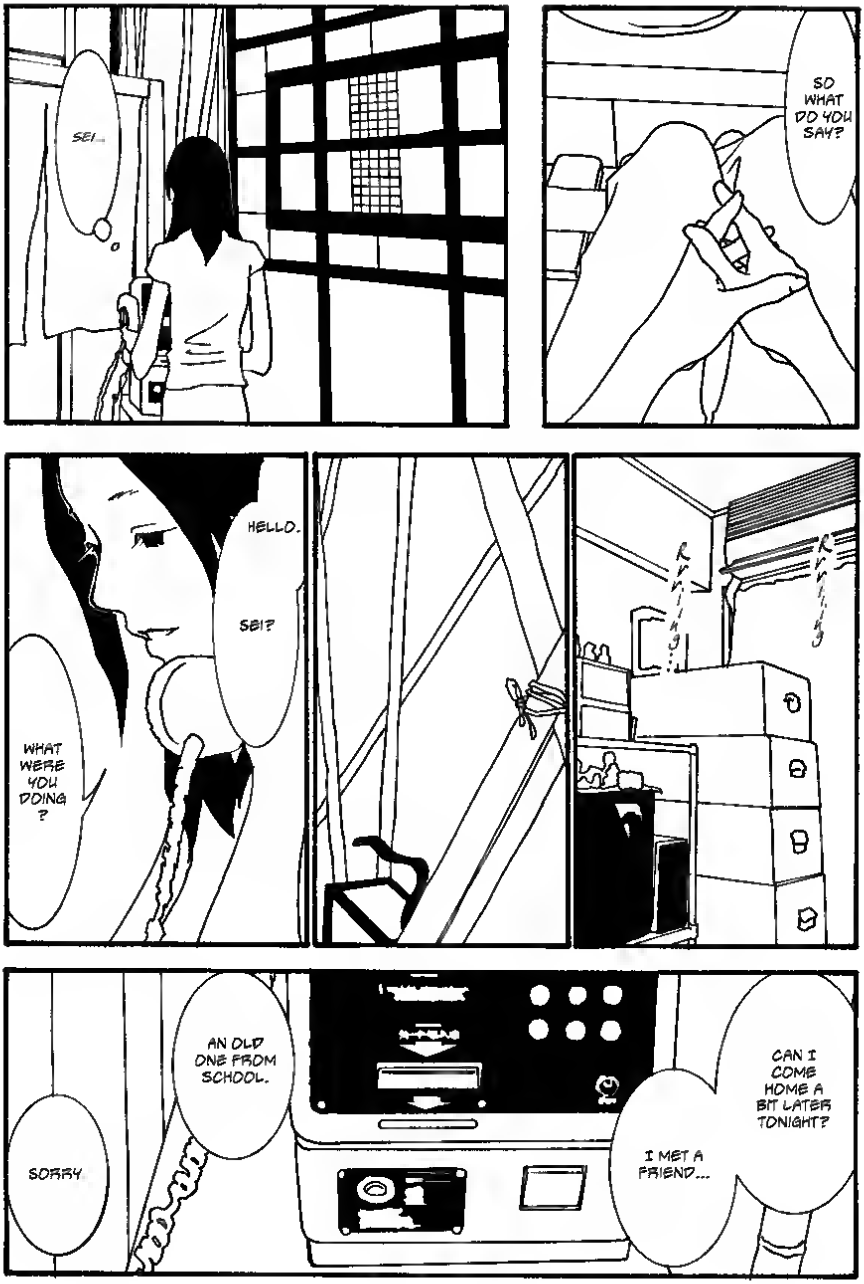

BEING BROKE IS SO NERVE RACKING
flop
新八王子


OK ...
CAN I COUNT ON YOU? I WILL LEAVE YOU ALONE WITH HIM. DO YOUR BEST TO MAKE HIM COME BACK!
THIS CLIENT IS HERE FOR THE FIRST TIME BUT HE SEEMS TO BE LOADED
MIHO! NO. 4, PLEASE
I AM MIHO.
NICE TO MEET YOU.

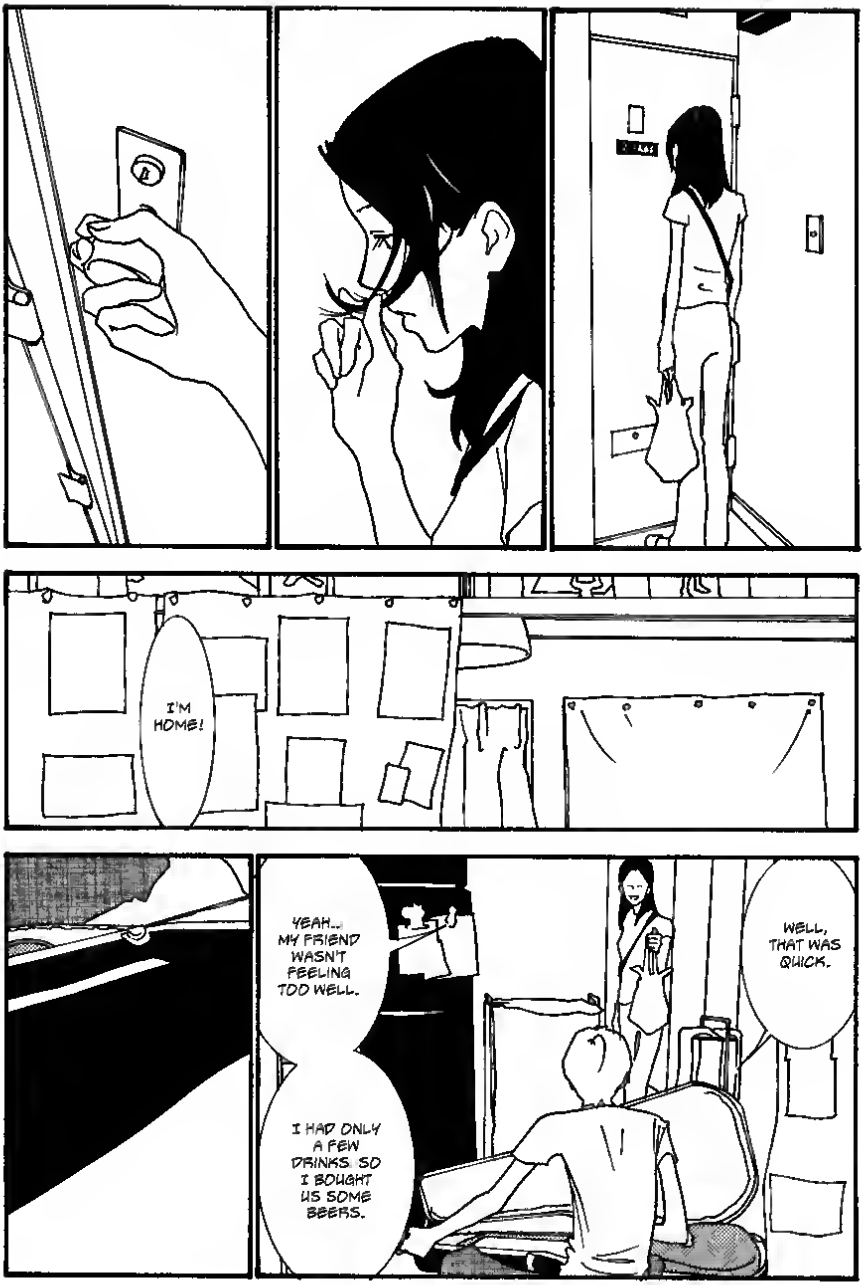

YOU LOOK REALLY ELEGANT IN THAT SUIT OF YOURS!
YOU'RE MY TYPE!
HA HA HA!
...
DO YOU PREFER YOUR WHISKY STRAIGHT, OR ON THE ROCKS?
OK, LET'S GO WITH A STRAIGHT ONE THEN! OR NOT.
...
HA HA HA HA HA!
AHH, GO ALONG WITH YOU!
HA HA HA HA HA HA!
WHY ARE YOU WORKING IN A PLACE LIKE THIS?
HUH?
TELL ME...

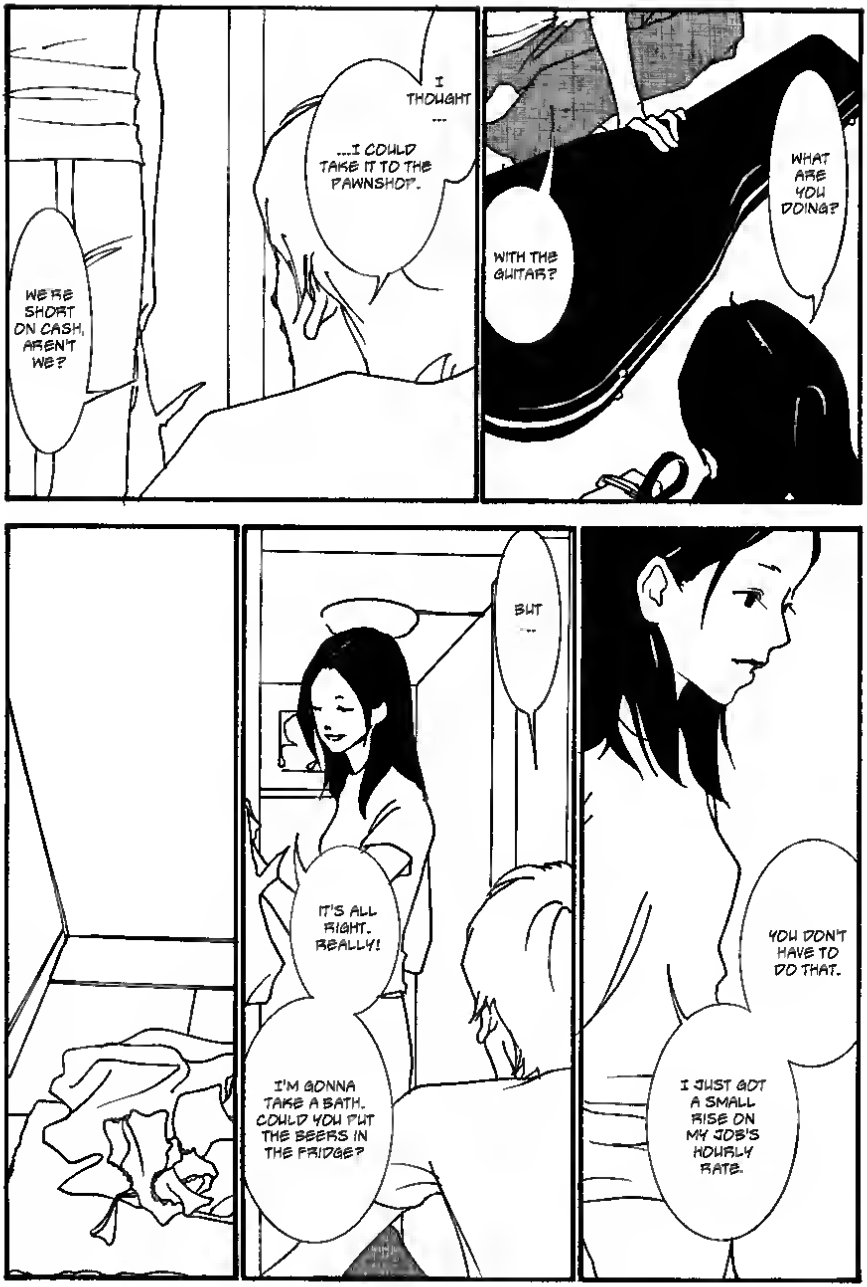

IF THAT'S THE CASE THEN THERE'S A BETTER WAY TO EARN IT.
ARE YOU INTER-ESTED ?
IS IT MONEY THAT YOU WANT?
WELL... YES, BUT...
OK... WHY NOT?
BE SURE TO KEEP IT A SECRET FROM YOUR BOSS.
IF YOU ARE WE CAN TALK ABOUT IT SOMEWHERE ELSE WHEN YOU'RE FINISHED HERE.

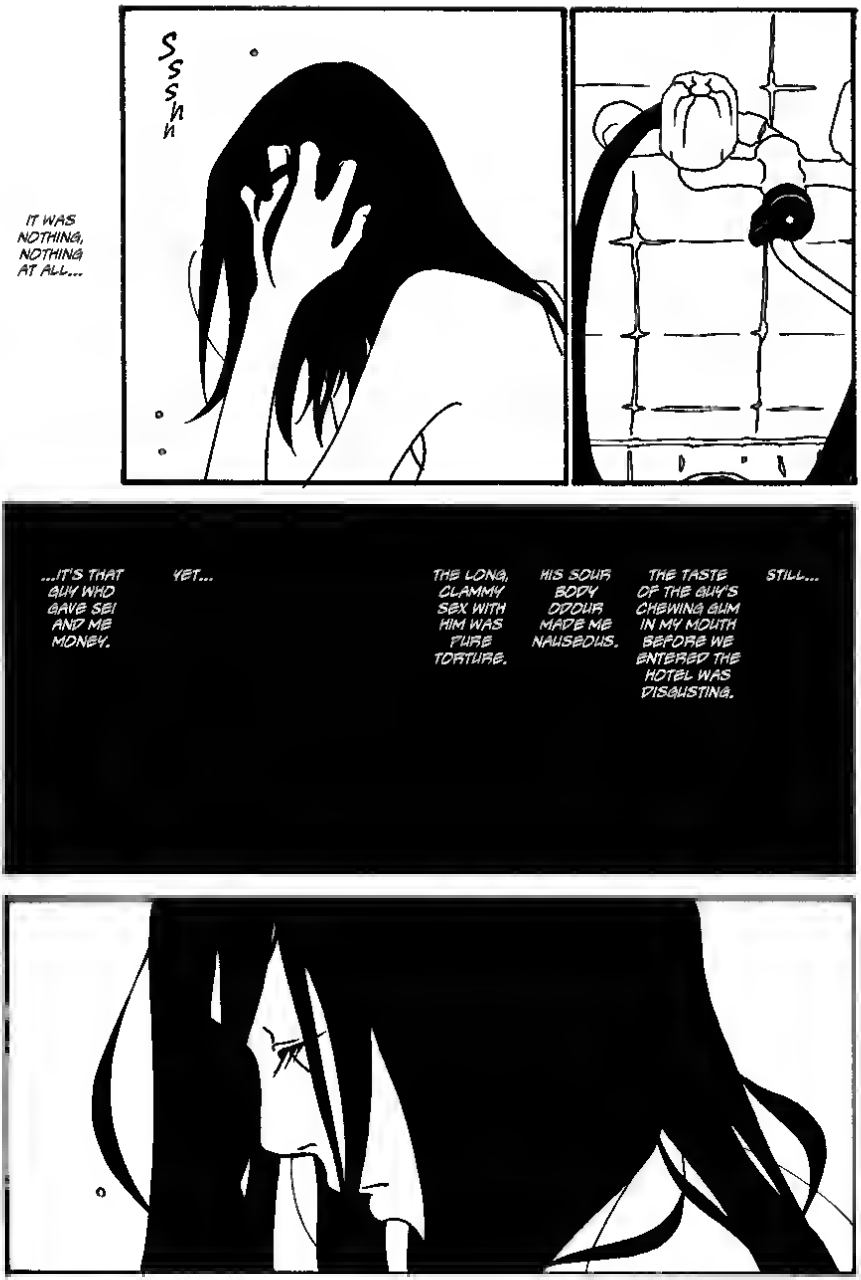

...
Um.. SO...
WHAT DID YOU WANT TO TALK TO ME ABOUT?
THANKS FOR THE GORGEOUS MEAL. YOU'RE TOO KIND!
DO YOU ENJOY SEX?
I WILL PAY YOU 100,000 YEN EACH TIME WE DO IT.
WE MEET TWICE A MONTH FOR ABOUT TWO HOURS.
TO CUT TO THE CHASE ...
I WANT YOU TO SLEEP WITH ME.
IF WE START TODAY I WILL GIVE YOU 200,000 YEN FOR THE FIRST TIME.


SEI...
SO WHAT DO YOU SAY?
HELLO.
SEI?
WHAT WERE YOU DOING?
KRRRING...
KRRRING
I MET A FRIEND...
CAN I COME HOME A BIT LATER TONIGHT?
AN OLD ONE FROM SCHOOL.
SORRY

I'M SORRY, SEI.

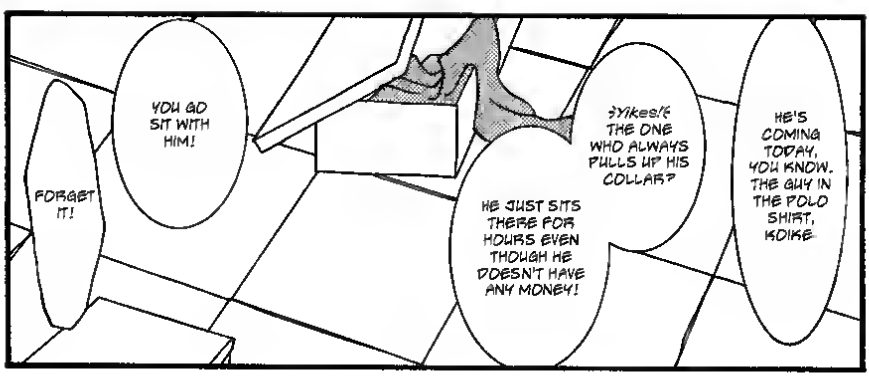

I'M HOME!
YEAH... MY FRIEND WASN'T FEELING TOO WELL.
I HAD ONLY A FEW DRINKS. SO I BOUGHT US SOME BEERS.
WELL, THAT WAS QUICK.

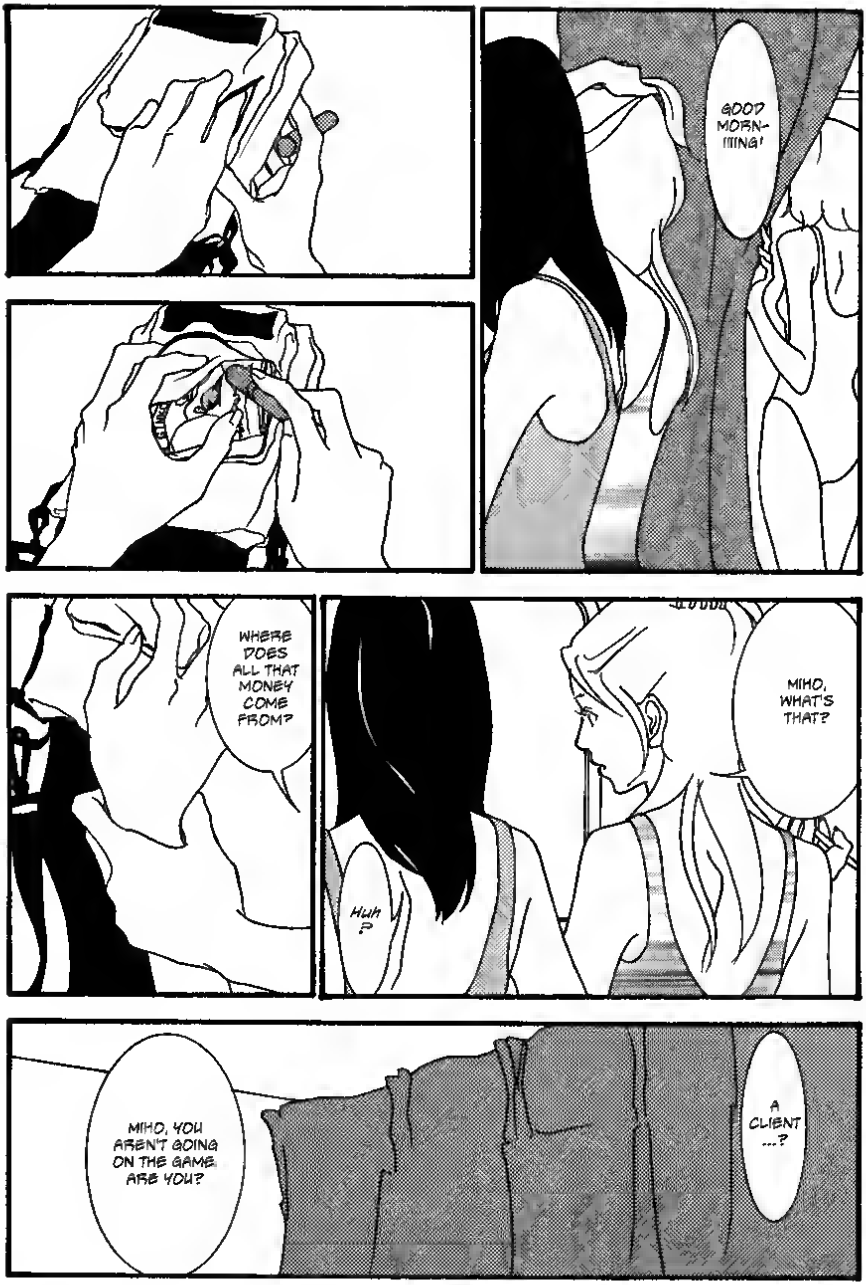

WE'RE SHORT ON CASH, AREN'T WE?
I THOUGHT ...
...I COULD TAKE IT TO THE PAWNSHOP.
WITH THE GUITAR?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I'M GONNA TAKE A BATH. COULD YOU PUT THE BEERS IN THE FRIDGE?
IT'S ALL RIGHT. REALLY!
BUT ...
I JUST GOT A SMALL RISE ON MY JOB'S HOURLY RATE.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THAT.

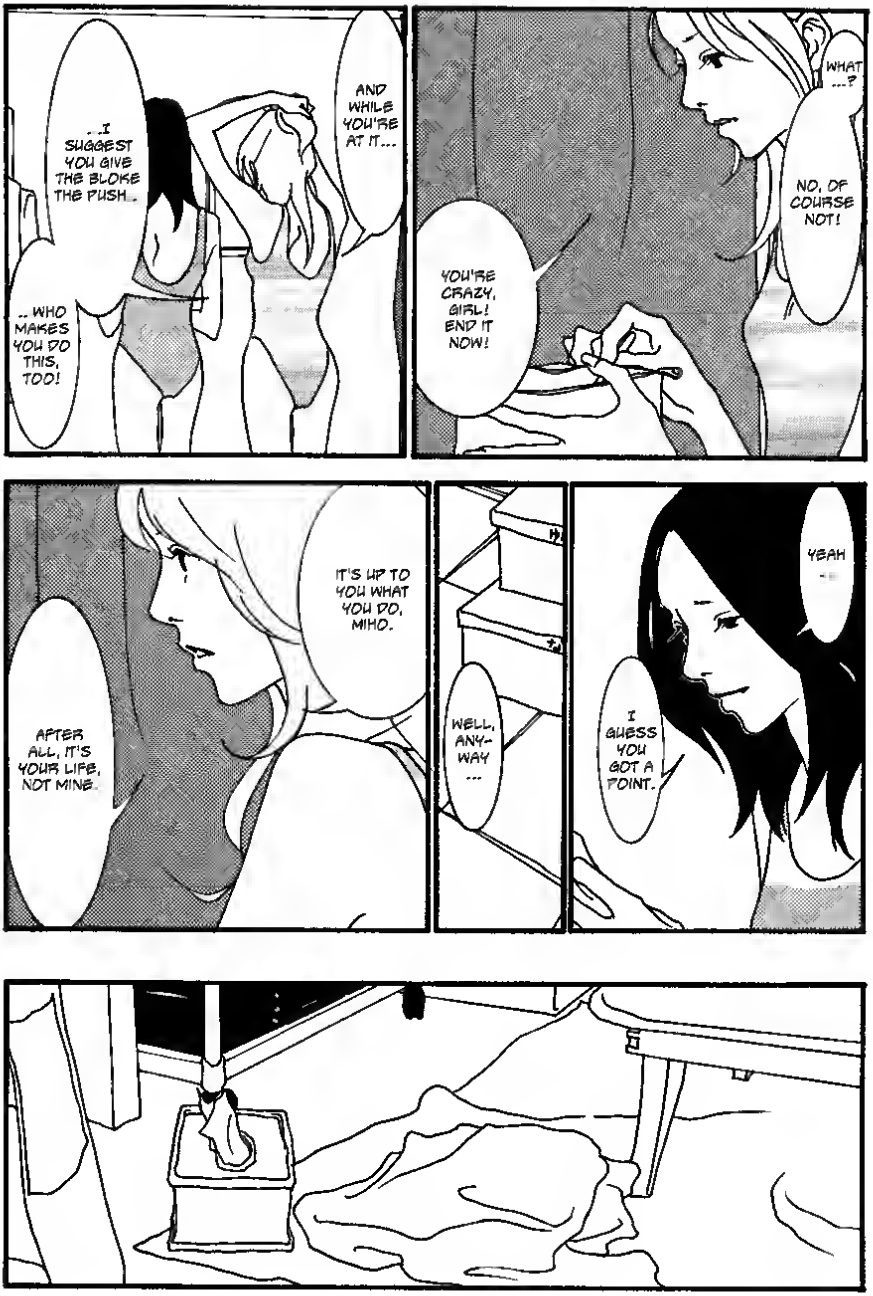

IT WAS NOTHING, NOTHING AT ALL...
SSSh
...IT'S THAT GUY WHO GAVE SEI AND ME MONEY.
YET...
THE LONG, CLAMMY SEX WITH HIM WAS PURE TORTURE.
HIS SOUR BODY ODOUR MADE ME NAUSEOUS.
THE TASTE OF THE GUY'S CHEWING GUM IN MY MOUTH BEFORE WE ENTERED THE HOTEL WAS DISGUSTING.
STILL...

Chapter 4

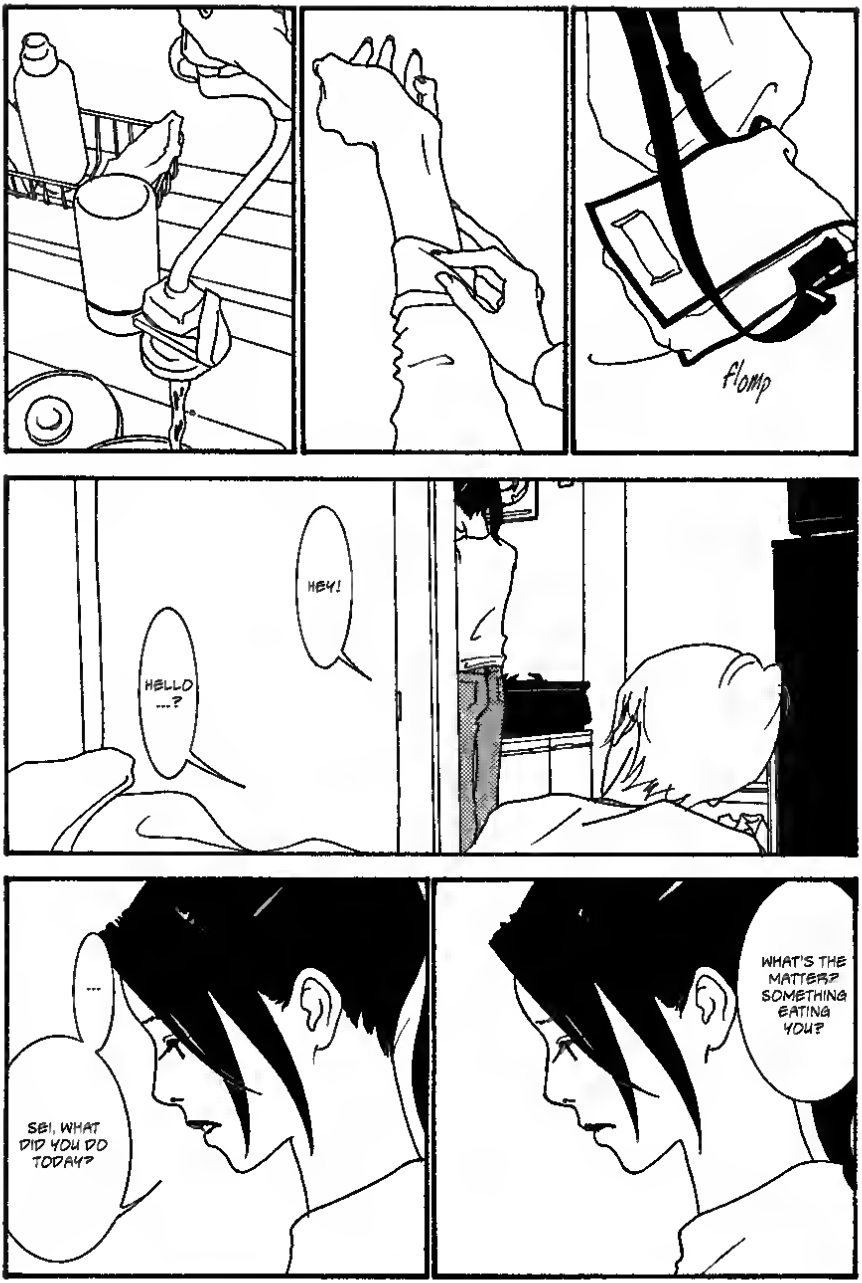
WHAT AM I HOPING TO PROTECT BY DOING SUCH A THING?
I LET MYSELF BE GROPED FOR MONEY.
JUST WHAT AM I TRYING TO SAVE BY DOING THIS?


YOU GO SIT WITH HIM!
FORGET IT!
HE JUST SITS THERE FOR HOURS EVEN THOUGH HE DOESN'T HAVE ANY MONEY!
;Yikes!; THE ONE WHO ALWAYS PULLS UP HIS COLLAR?
HE'S COMING TODAY, YOU KNOW. THE GUY IN THE POLO SHIRT, KOIKE.

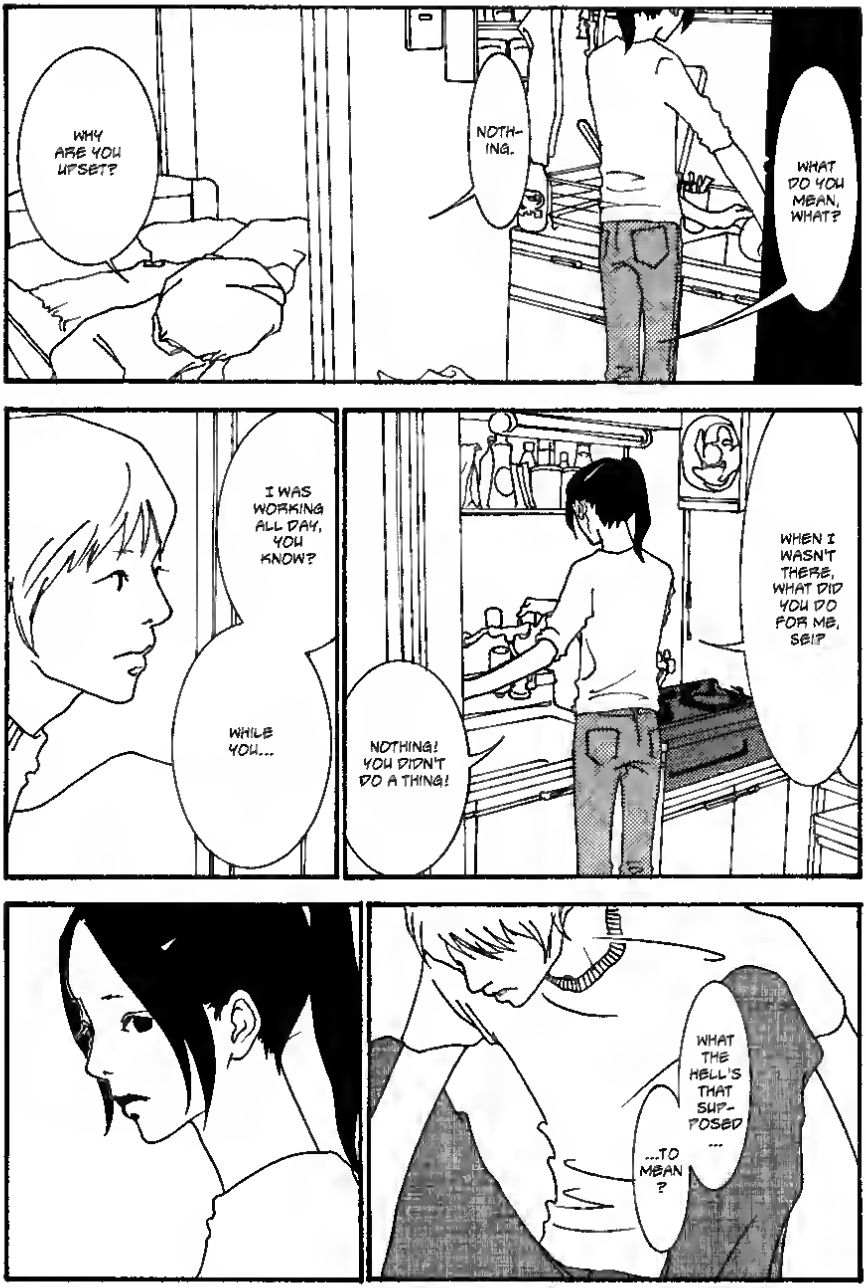

GOOD MORN-IIING!
WHERE DOES ALL THAT MONEY COME FROM?
MIHO, WHAT'S THAT?
HUH?
MIHO, YOU AREN'T GOING ON THE GAME, ARE YOU?
A CLIENT ...?

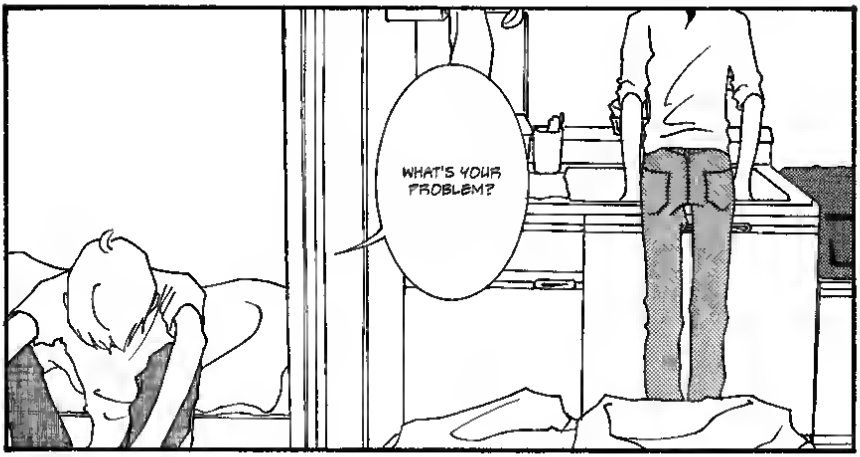

AND WHILE YOU'RE AT IT...
..I SUGGEST YOU GIVE THE BLOKE THE PUSH..
..WHO MAKES YOU DO THIS, TOO!
WHAT ...?
NO, OF COURSE NOT!
YOU'RE CRAZY, GIRL! END IT NOW!
IT'S UP TO YOU WHAT YOU DO, MIHO.
AFTER ALL, IT'S YOUR LIFE, NOT MINE.
WELL, ANY-WAY ...
YEAH -
I GUESS YOU GOT A POINT.

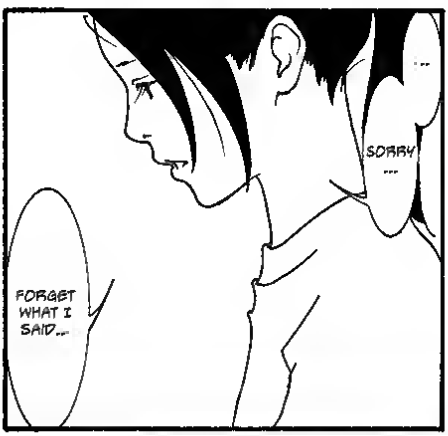
I'M HOME.
WELCOME BACK!


flomp
HEY!
HELLO ---?
WHAT'S THE MATTER? SOMETHING EATING YOU?

SEI, WHAT DID YOU DO TODAY?


WHY ARE YOU UPSET?
NOTH-ING.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, WHAT?
I WAS WORKING ALL DAY, YOU KNOW?
WHILE YOU...
NOTHING! YOU DIDN'T DO A THING!
WHEN I WASN'T THERE, WHAT DID YOU DO FOR ME, SEI?
WHAT THE HELL'S THAT SUP-POSED ...
...TO MEAN?





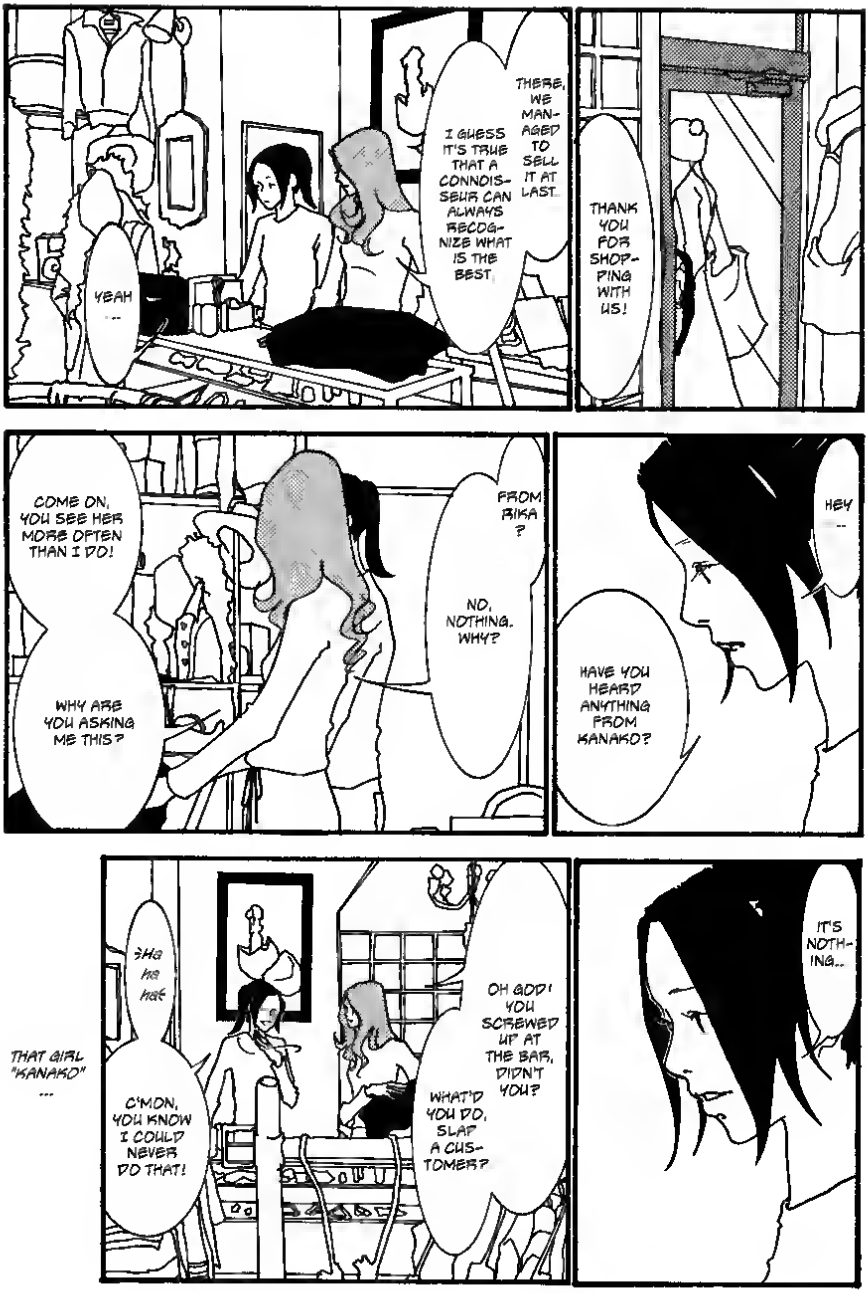
I'M THE ONE AT FAULT.

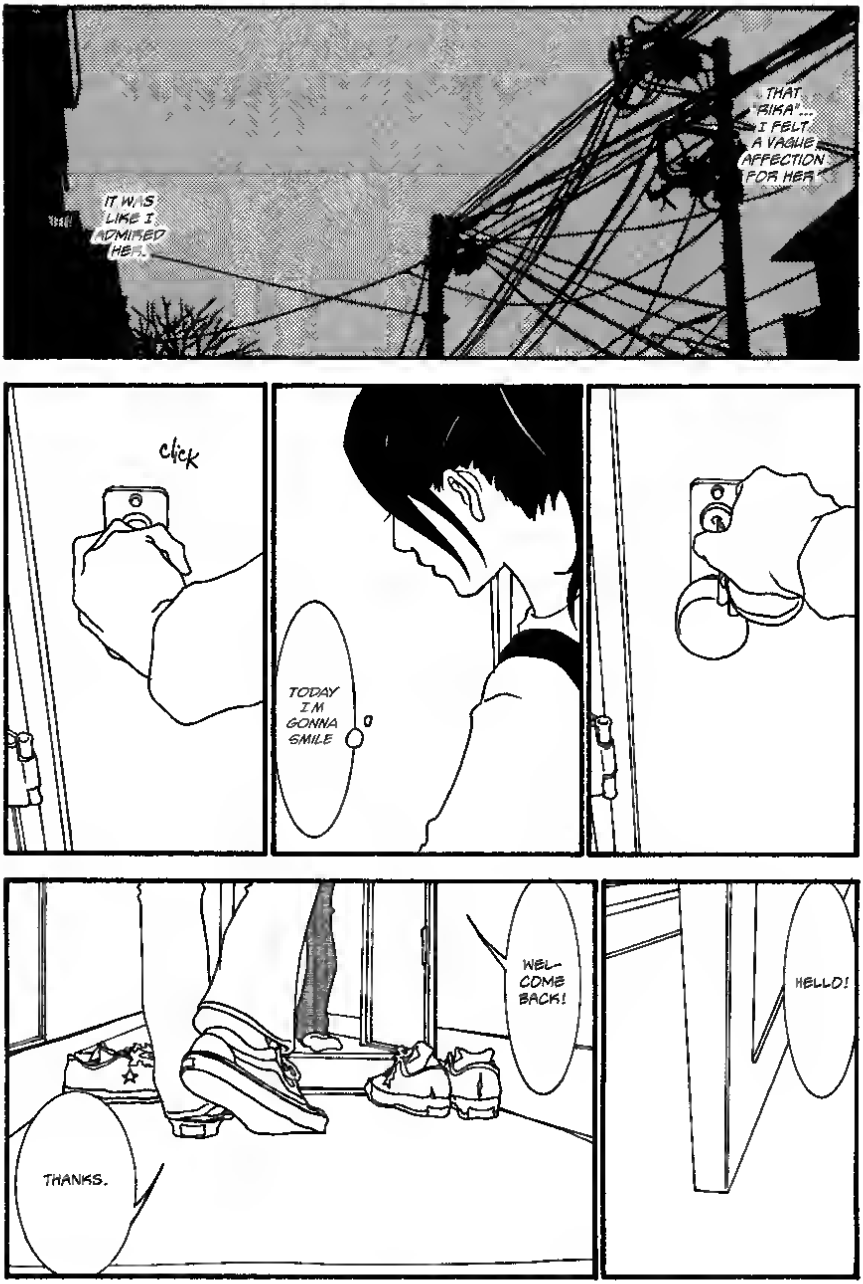
I PRETEND TO DO EVERYTHING TO HELP HIM AND I MAKE HIM RESPONSIBLE FOR EVERYTHING.

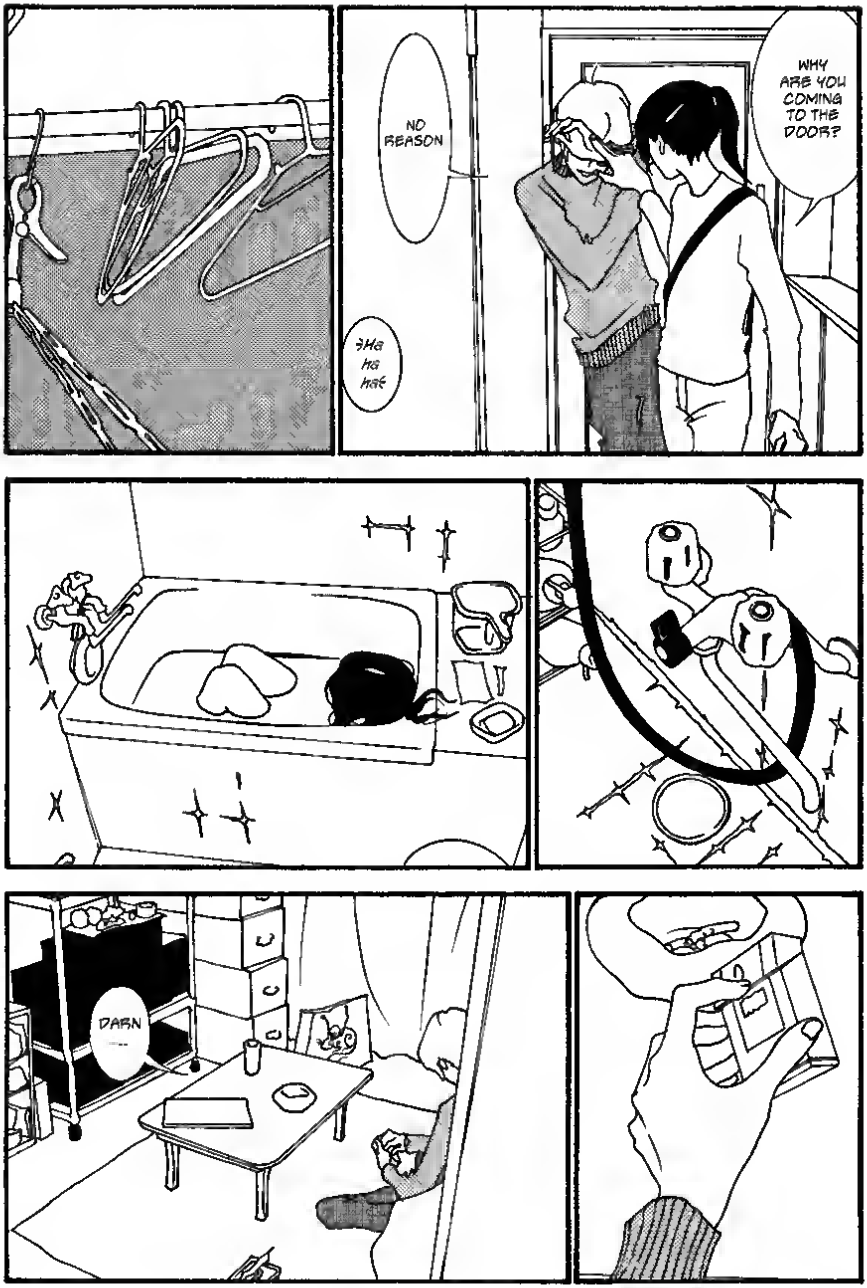
I BLAME HIM AND I GET FRUSTRATED.

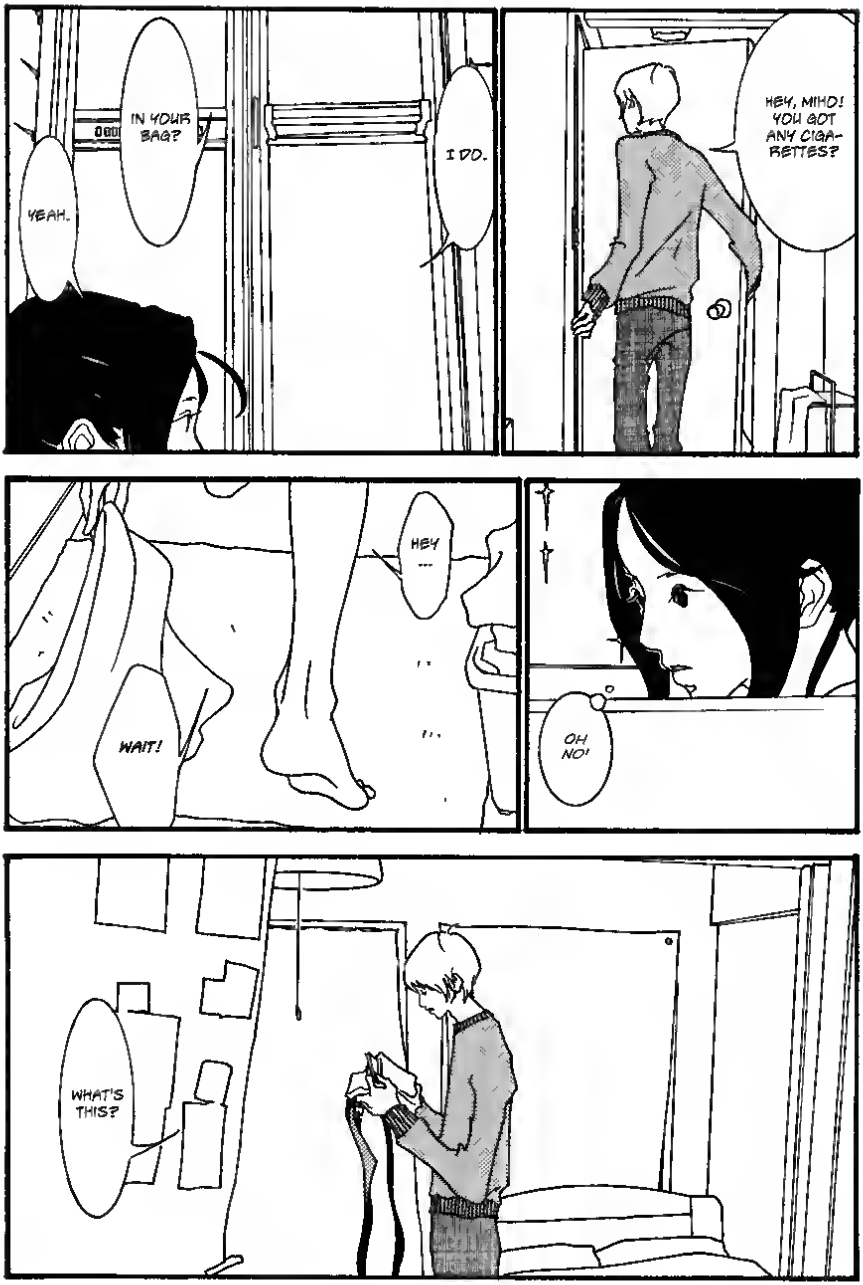
I BLAME SEI FOR SOMETHING THAT I'M DOING OF MY OWN FREE WILL, THAT I MYSELF CHOSE.

I'M MOST LIKELY IN THE WRONG.

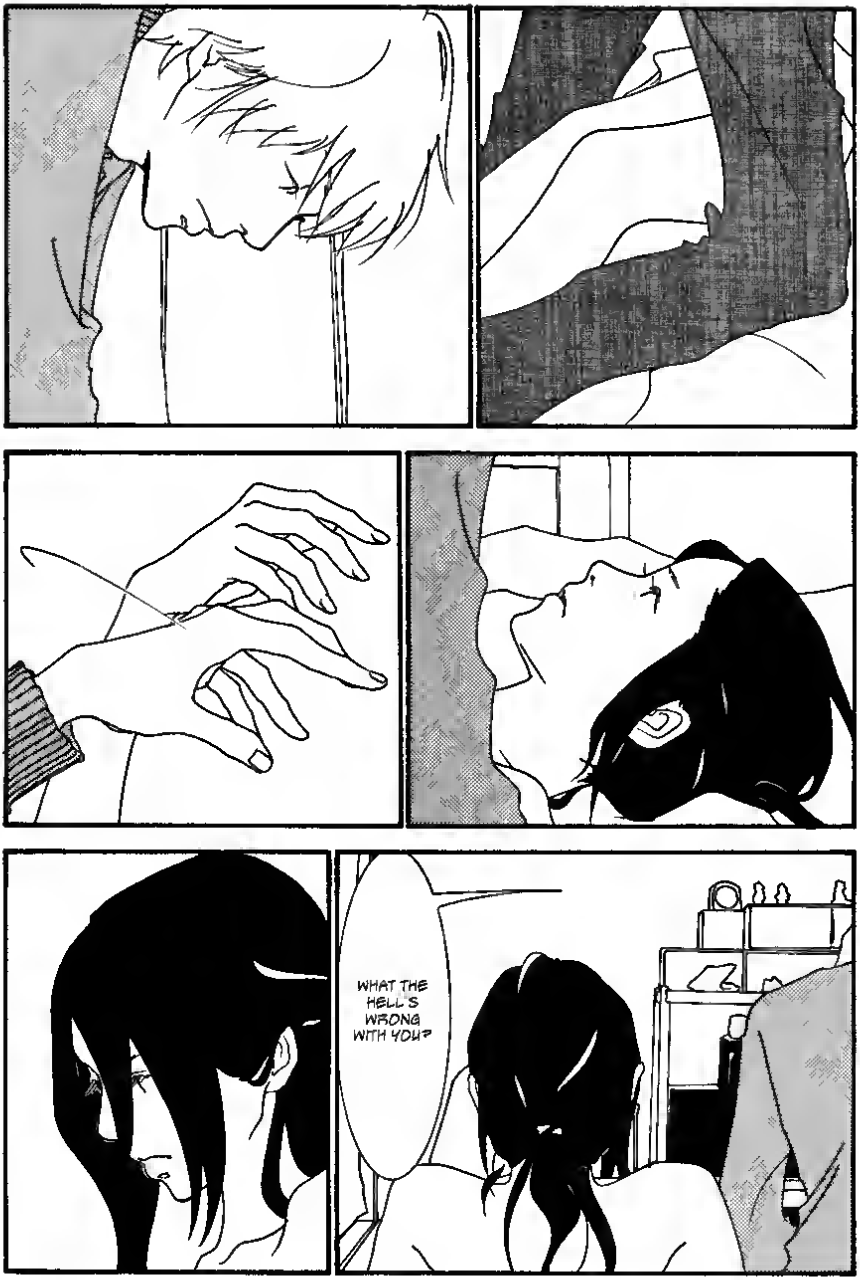

YEAH ...
I GUESS IT'S TRUE THAT A CONNOISSEUR CAN ALWAYS RECOGNIZE WHAT IS THE BEST.
THERE, WE MANAGED TO SELL IT AT LAST.
THANK YOU FOR SHOPPING WITH US!
COME ON, YOU SEE HER MORE OFTEN THAN I DO!
WHY ARE YOU ASKING ME THIS?
NO, NOTHING. WHY?
FROM RIKA?
HEY ...
HAVE YOU HEARD ANYTHING FROM KANAKO?
IT'S NOTHING...
OH GOD! YOU SCREWED UP AT THE BAR, DIDN'T YOU?
WHAT'D YOU DO, SLAP A CUSTOMER?
C'MON, YOU KNOW I COULD NEVER DO THAT!
SHE HE HE!
THAT GIRL "KANAKO" ...

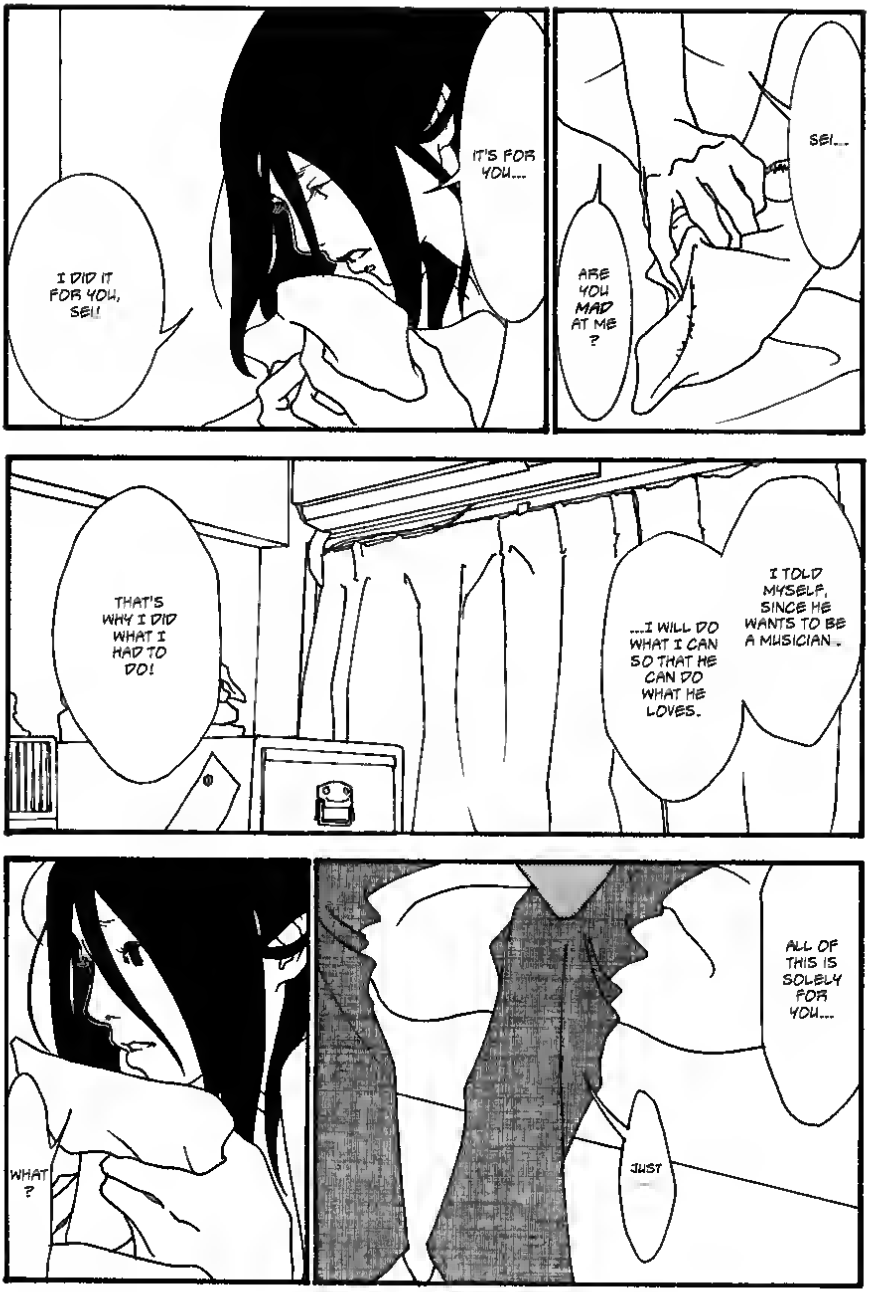

IT WAS LIKE I ADMIRED HER.
THAT "RIKA"... I FELT A VAGUE AFFECTION FOR HER.
click
TODAY I'M GONNA SMILE
WELCOME BACK!
THANKS.
HELLO!

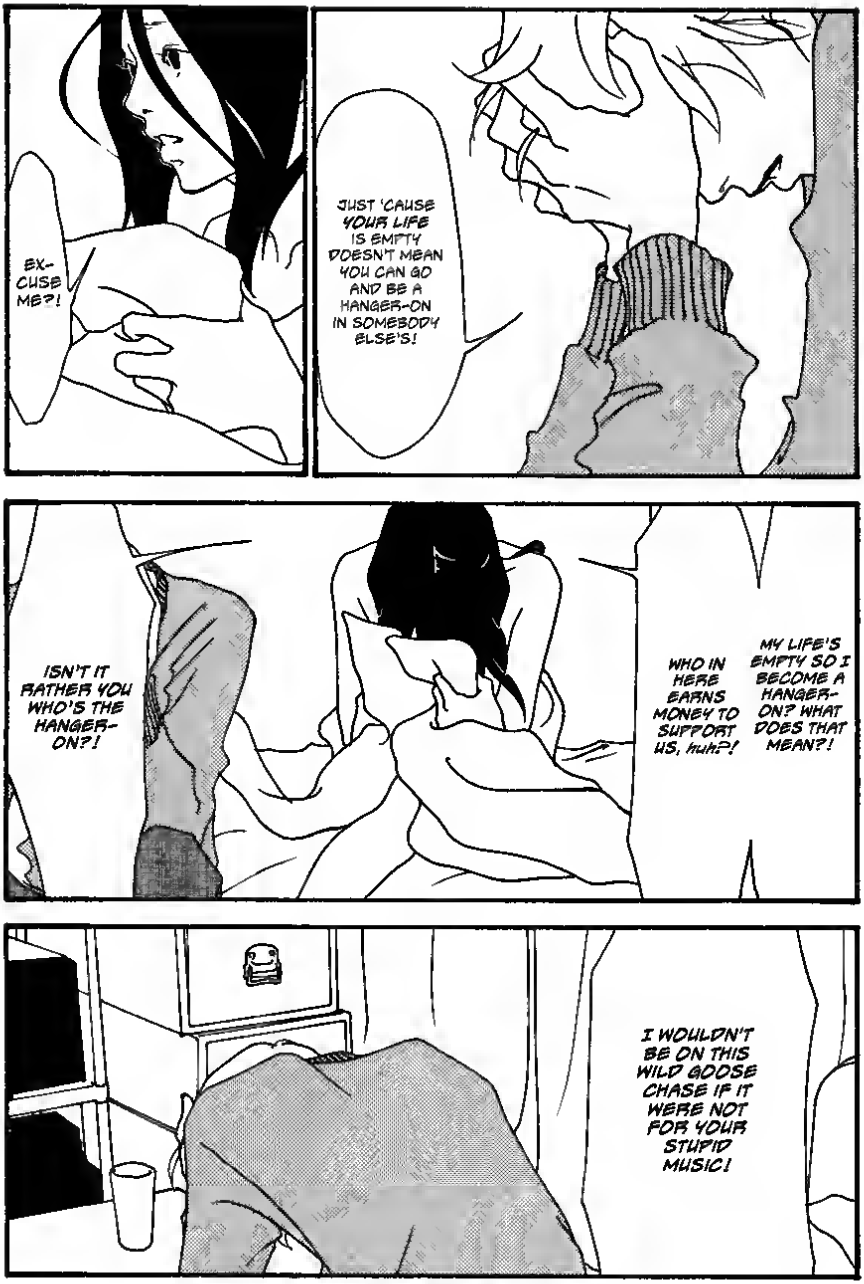

NO REASON
SHE HE HAS
WHY ARE YOU COMING TO THE DOOR?
DARN

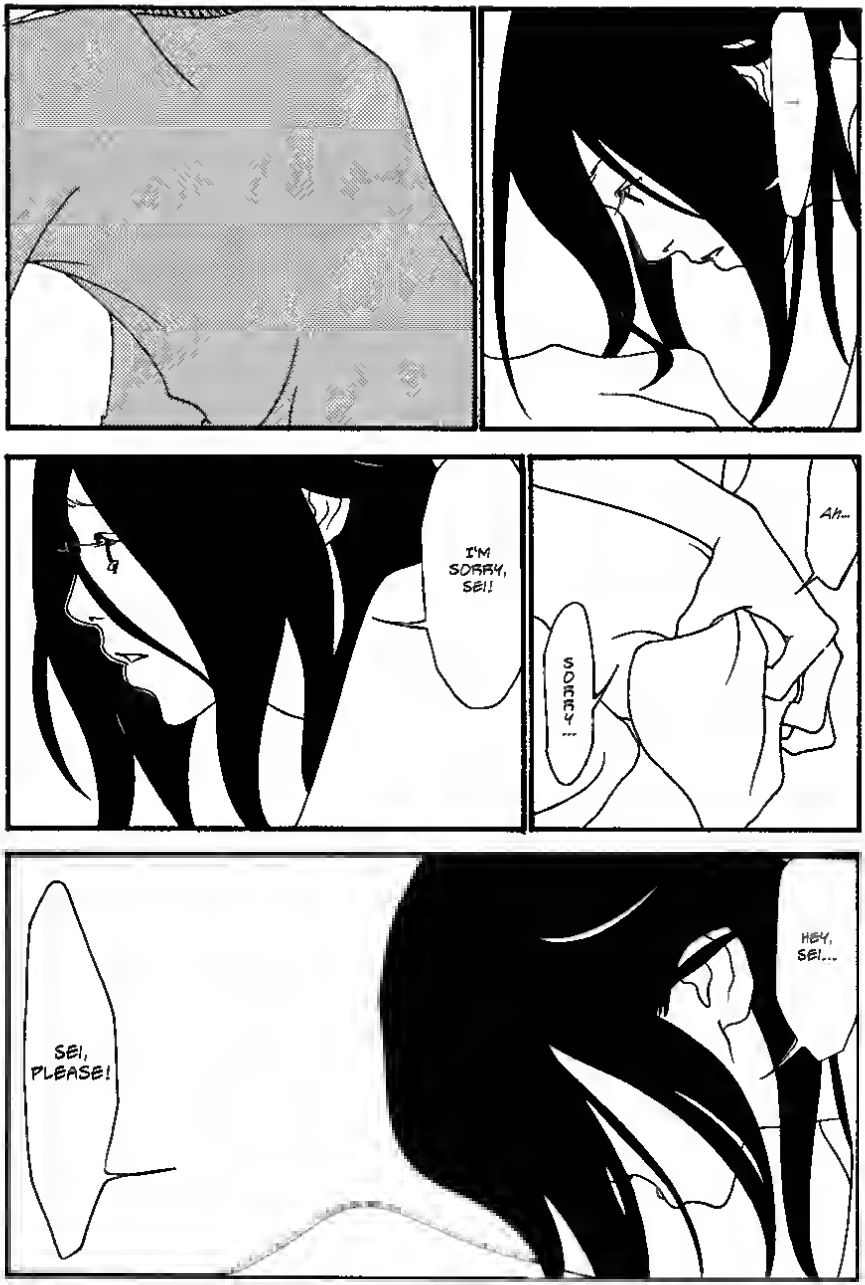

HEY, MIHO! YOU GOT ANY CIGARETTES?
I DO.
IN YOUR BAG?
YEAH.
HEY ...
WAIT!
OH NO!
WHAT'S THIS?

Um ...
DID YOU WANT TO HIDE THIS MONEY FROM ME SO BAD THAT YOU HAD TO RUSH OUT OF THE BATH LIKE THAT?
HEY, WHAT'S THIS MONEY?
WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?
ARE YOU A WHO... RE?


WHAT THE HELL'S WRONG WITH YOU?


I DID IT FOR YOU, SEI!
IT'S FOR YOU....
SEI...
ARE YOU MAD AT ME ?
THAT'S WHY I DID WHAT I HAD TO DO!
....I WILL DO WHAT I CAN SO THAT HE CAN DO WHAT HE LOVES.
I TOLD MYSELF, SINCE HE WANTS TO BE A MUSICIAN.
WHAT ?
JUST
ALL OF THIS IS SOLELY FOR YOU....


EX-CUSE ME?!
JUST 'CAUSE YOUR LIFE IS EMPTY DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN GO AND BE A HANGER-ON IN SOMEBODY ELSE'S!
MY LIFE'S EMPTY SO I BECOME A HANGER-ON? WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?!
WHO IN HERE EARNS MONEY TO SUPPORT US, huh?!
ISN'T IT RATHER YOU WHO'S THE HANGER-ON?!
I WOULDN'T BE ON THIS WILD GOOSE CHASE IF IT WERE NOT FOR YOUR STUPID MUSIC!


I'M SORRY, SEI!
AH...
SORRY!
HEY, SEI...
SEI, PLEASE!

SEIICHI DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING.
HE WAS JUST SITTING THERE MOTIONLESS, IN COMPLETE SILENCE.

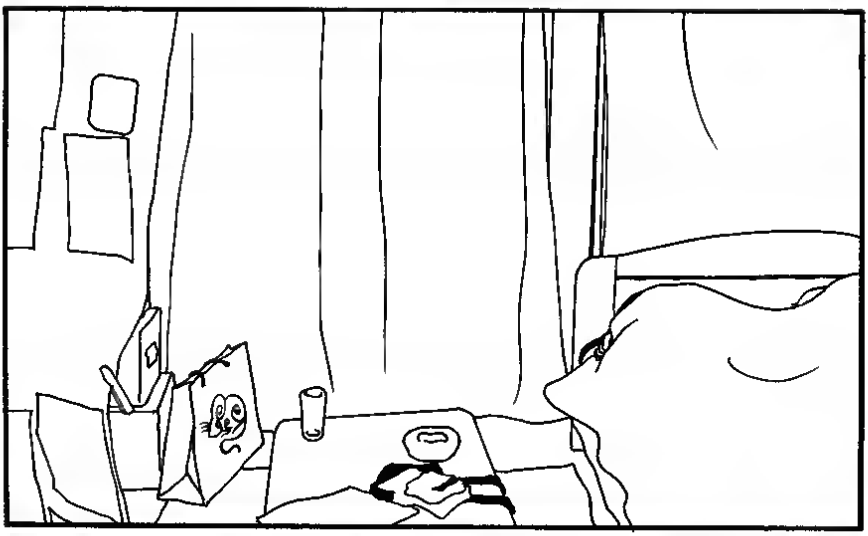
MAKING FUN OF OTHER PEOPLE'S DREAMS IS THE PITS.
HOWEVER, WHAT I SAID ABOUT HIS MUSIC WAS EVEN WORSE.
IT WAS NASTY OF ME TO BRING UP THE MONEY ISSUE.

IT'S PROBABLY ALL OVER BETWEEN US.

...THE TWO OF US HAVE NOWHERE ELSE TO GO.

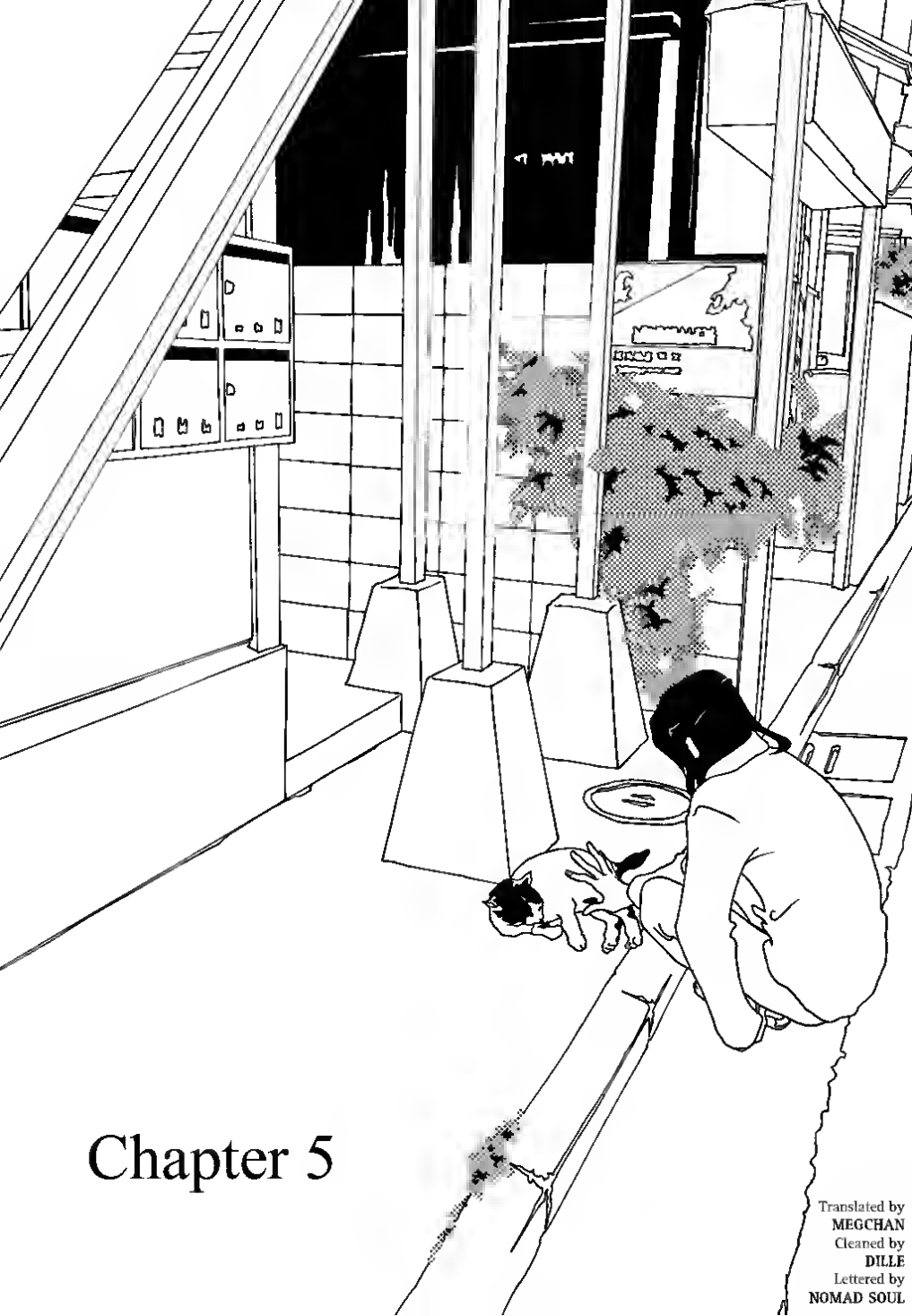
...BUT...

OUR RELATIONSHIP MIGHT HAVE COME TO AN END...



SUCH WERE THE THOUGHTS SWIRLING WITHIN MY MIND WHILE I LAY AWAKE IN BED.

WE ONLY HAVE EACH OTHER TO RELY ON.



Chapter 5

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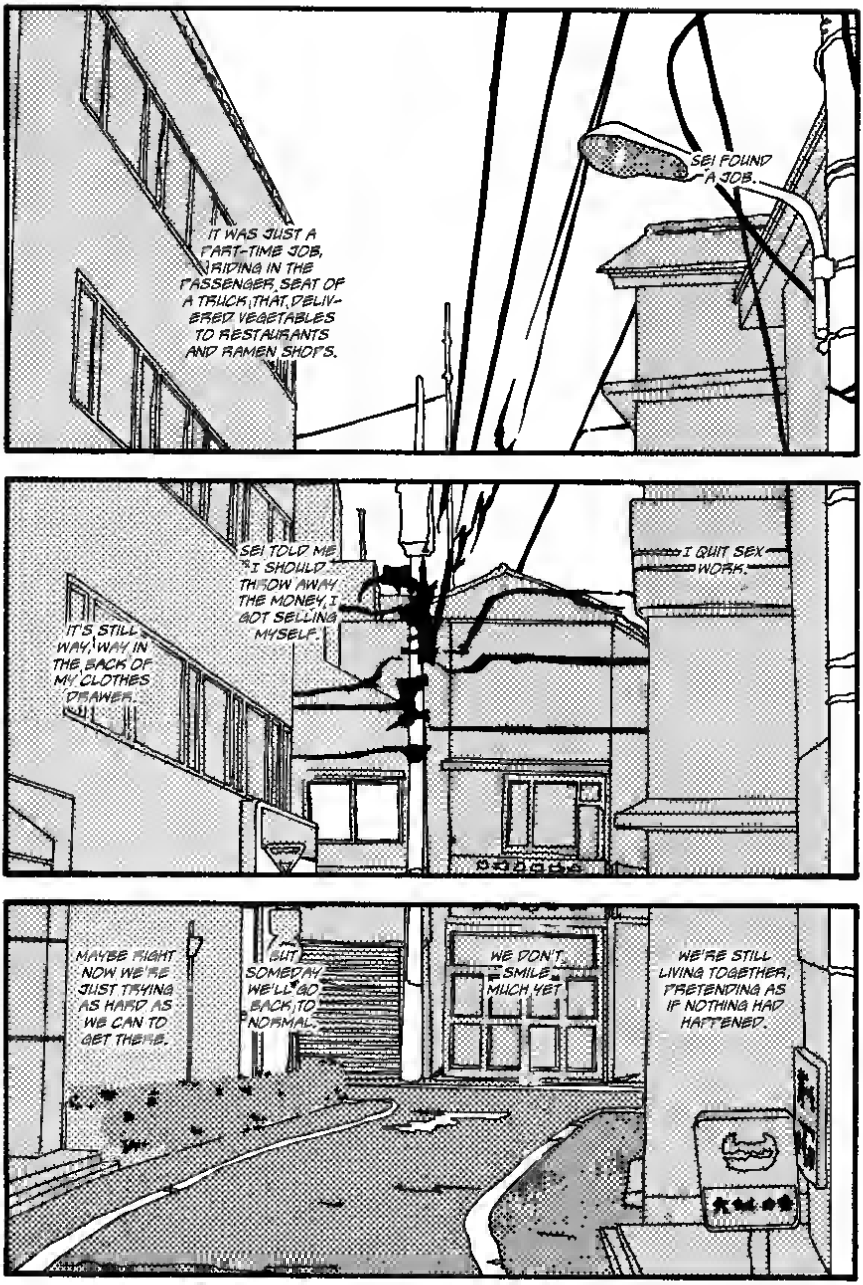
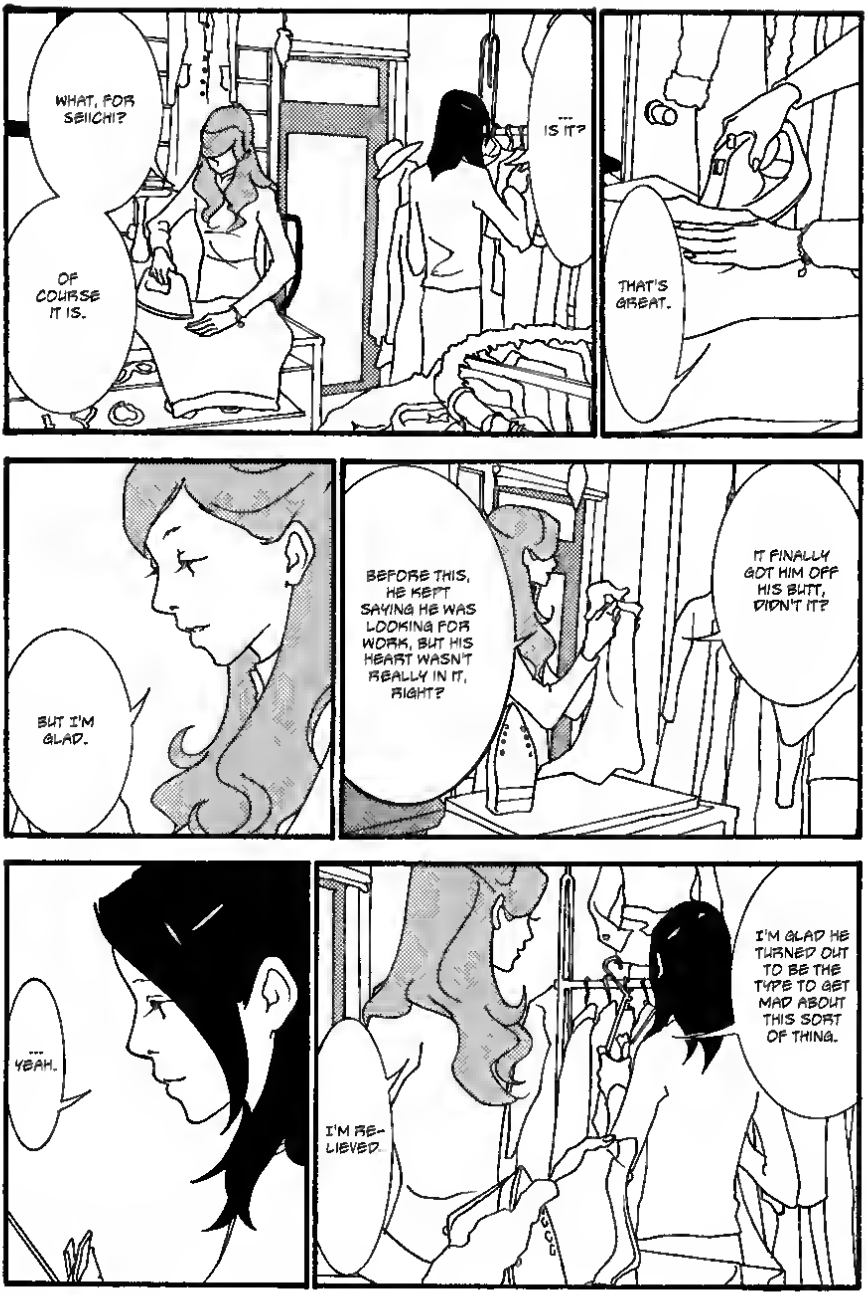
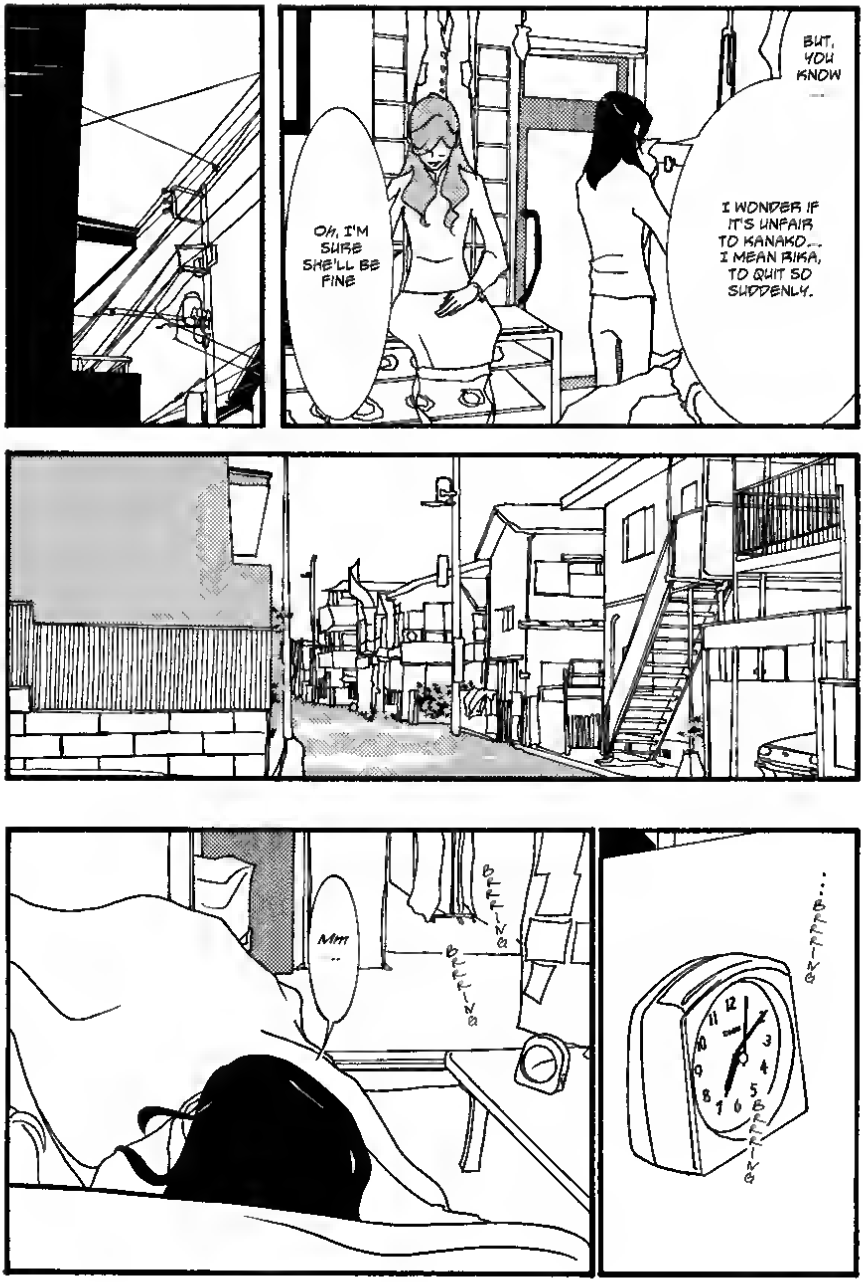
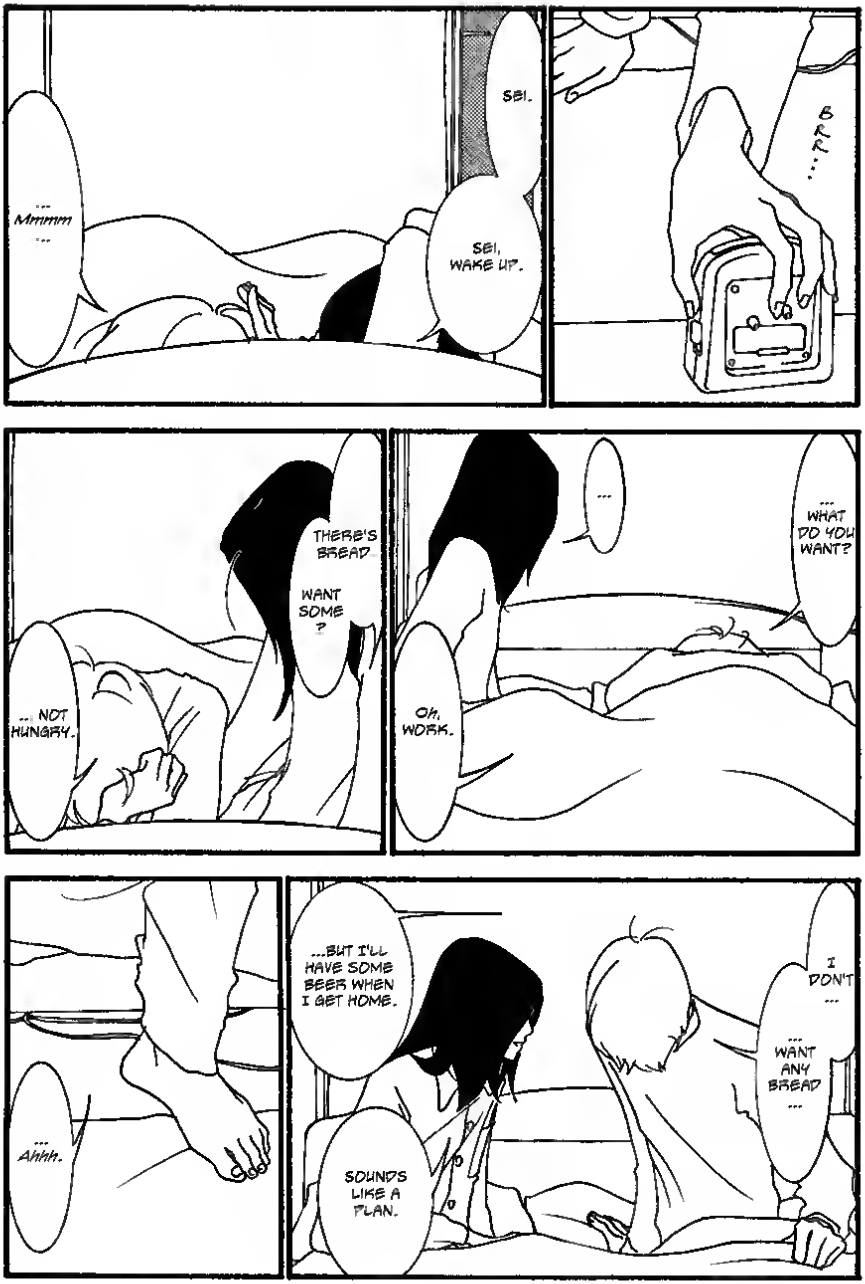
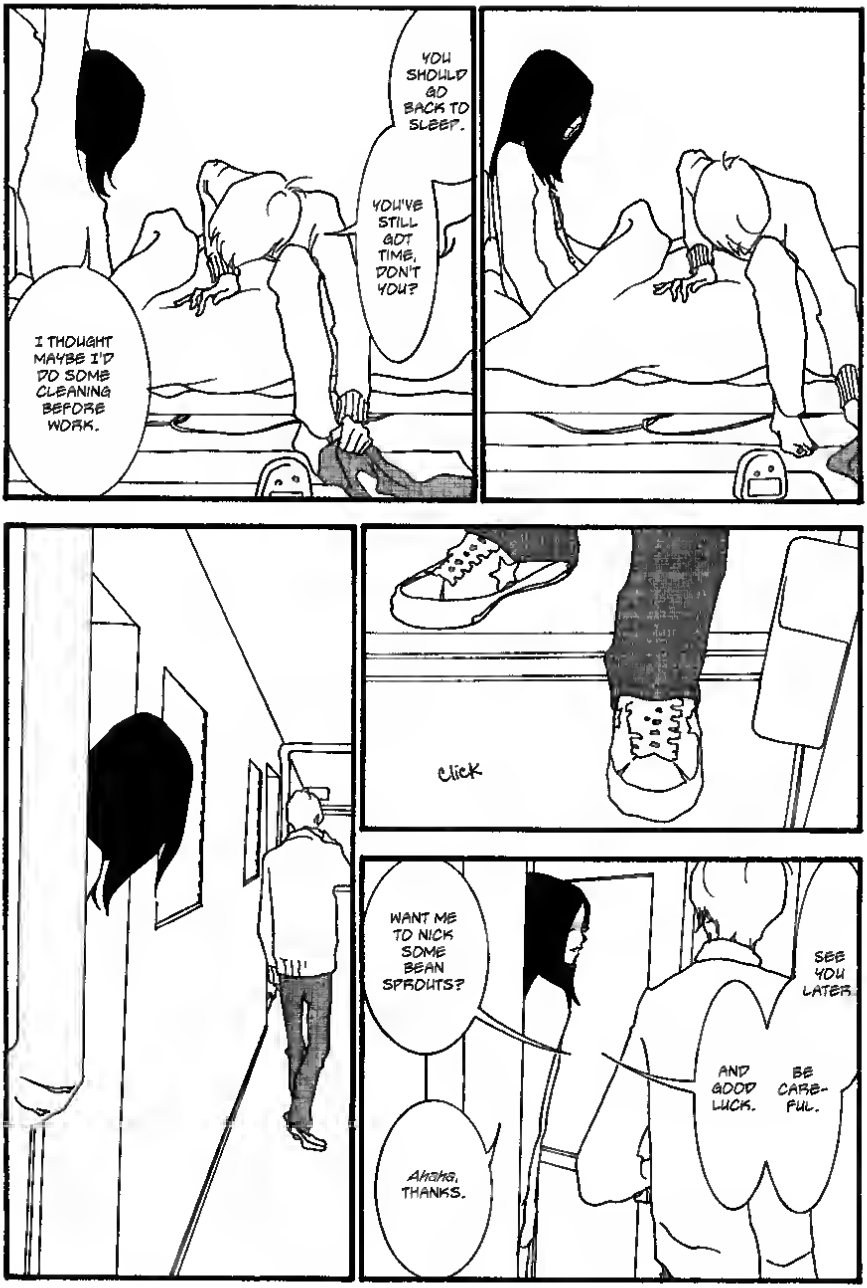
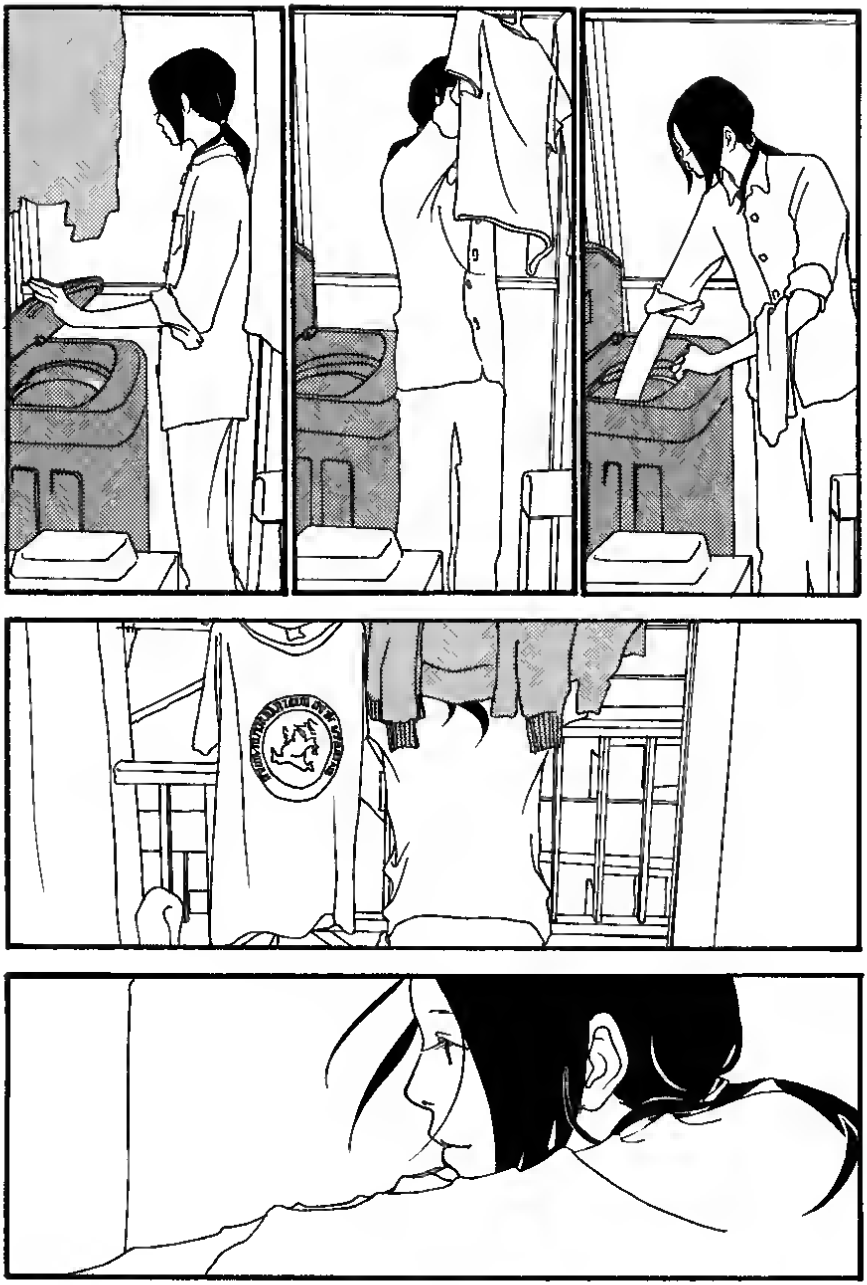

SEI FOUND A JOB.
IT WAS JUST A PART-TIME JOB, RIDING IN THE PASSENGER SEAT OF A TRUCK THAT DELIVERED VEGETABLES TO RESTAURANTS AND RAMEN SHOPS.
I QUIT SEX WORK.
SEI TOLD ME "I SHOULD THROW AWAY THE MONEY I GOT SELLING MYSELF."
IT'S STILL WAY, WAY IN THE BACK OF MY CLOTHES DRAWER.
WE'RE STILL LIVING TOGETHER, PRETENDING AS IF NOTHING HAD HAPPENED.
WE DON'T SMILE MUCH YET
BUT SOMEDAY WE'LL GO BACK TO NORMAL.
MAYBE RIGHT NOW WE'RE JUST TRYING AS HARD AS WE CAN TO GET THERE.

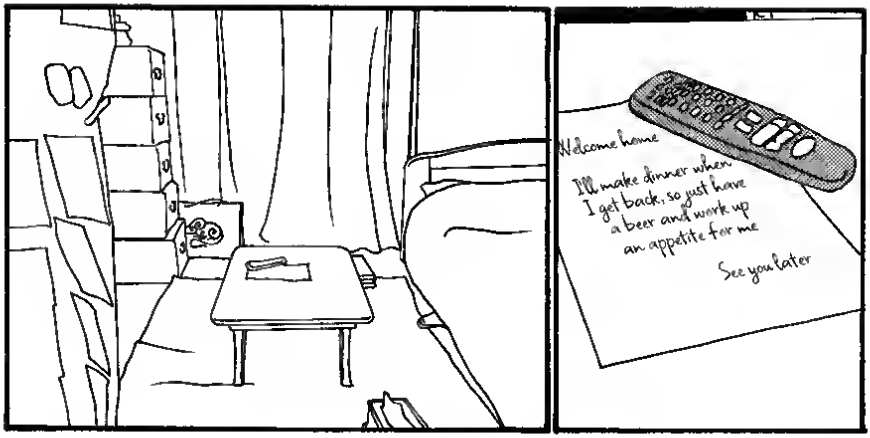

WHAT, FOR SEIICHI?
OF COURSE IT IS.
... IS IT?
THAT'S GREAT.
BUT I'M GLAD.
BEFORE THIS, HE KEPT SAYING HE WAS LOOKING FOR WORK, BUT HIS HEART WASN'T REALLY IN IT, RIGHT?
IT FINALLY GOT HIM OFF HIS BUTT, DIDN'T IT?
... YEAH.
I'M RELIEVED.
I'M GLAD HE TURNED OUT TO BE THE TYPE TO GET MAD ABOUT THIS SORT OF THING.

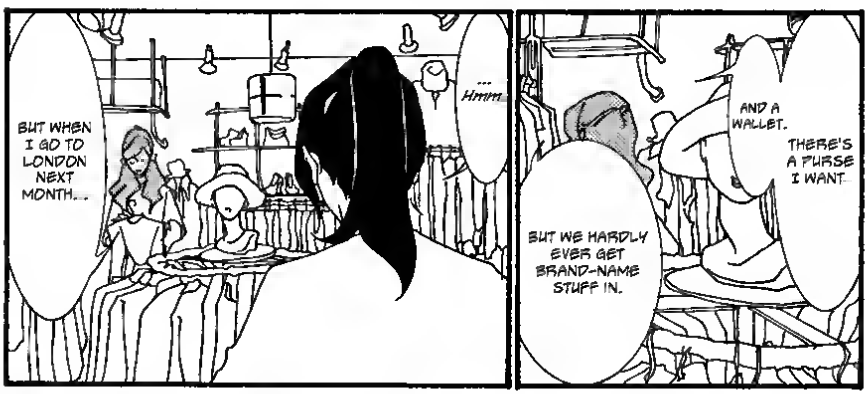

OH, I'M SURE SHE'LL BE FINE
BUT, YOU KNOW
I WONDER IF IT'S UNFAIR TO KANAKO... I MEAN RIKA, TO QUIT SO SUDDENLY.
MM ...
BEEPING
BEEPING
...BEEPING
BEEPING

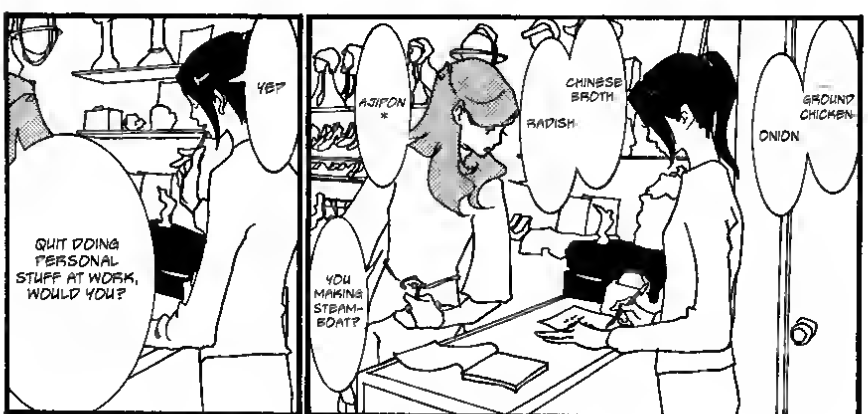

SEI.
... Mmmm ...
SEI, WAKE UP.
BRR...
THERE'S BREAD. WANT SOME?
... NOT HUNGRY.
... WHAT DO YOU WANT?
...
OH, WORK.
...AHHH.
...BUT I'LL HAVE SOME BEER WHEN I GET HOME.
SOUNDS LIKE A PLAN.
I DON'T ... ... WANT ANY BREAD ...


I THOUGHT MAYBE I'D DO SOME CLEANING BEFORE WORK.
YOU'VE STILL GOT TIME, DON'T YOU?
YOU SHOULD GO BACK TO SLEEP.
click
WANT ME TO NICK SOME BEAN SPROUTS?
AHAHA, THANKS.
AND GOOD LUCK.
BE CARE-FUL.
SEE YOU LATER.

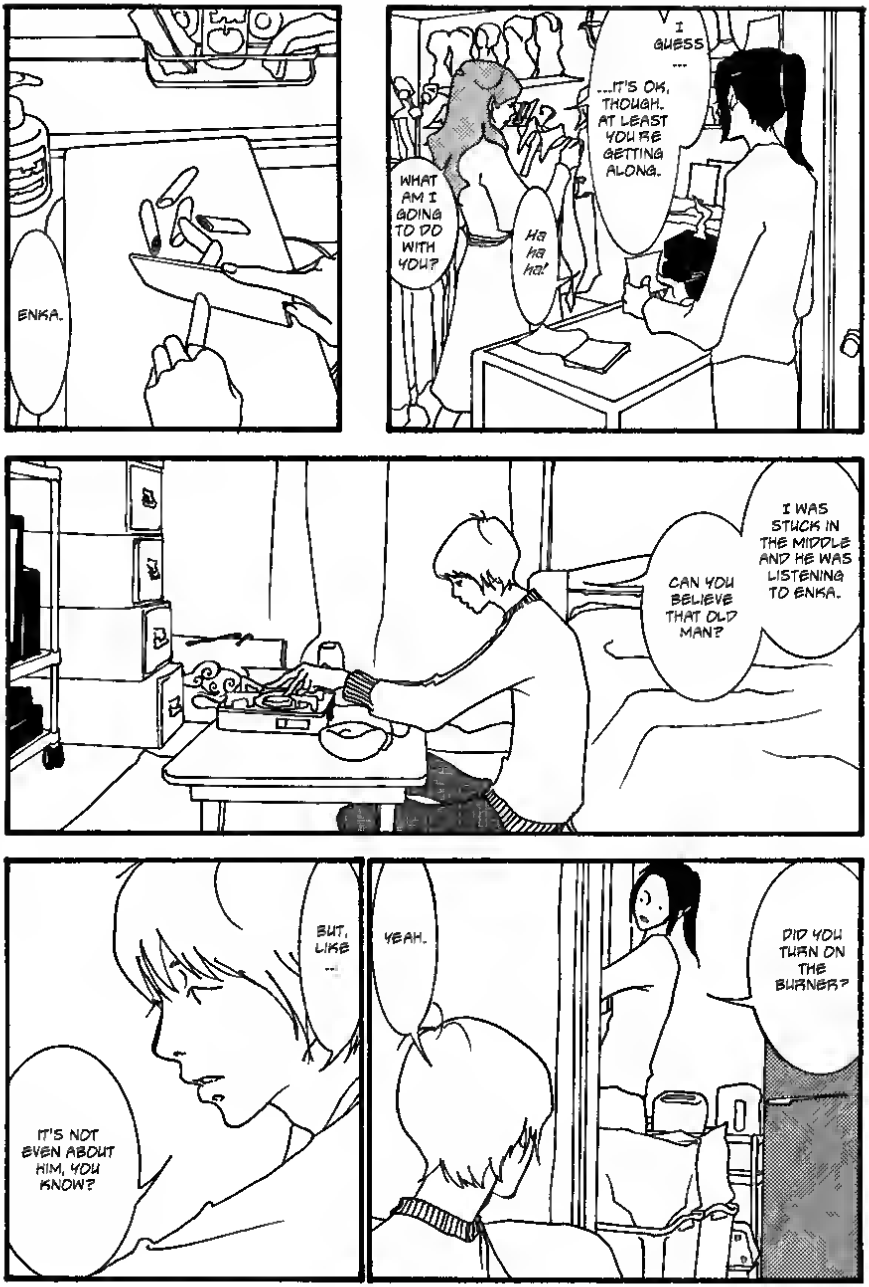


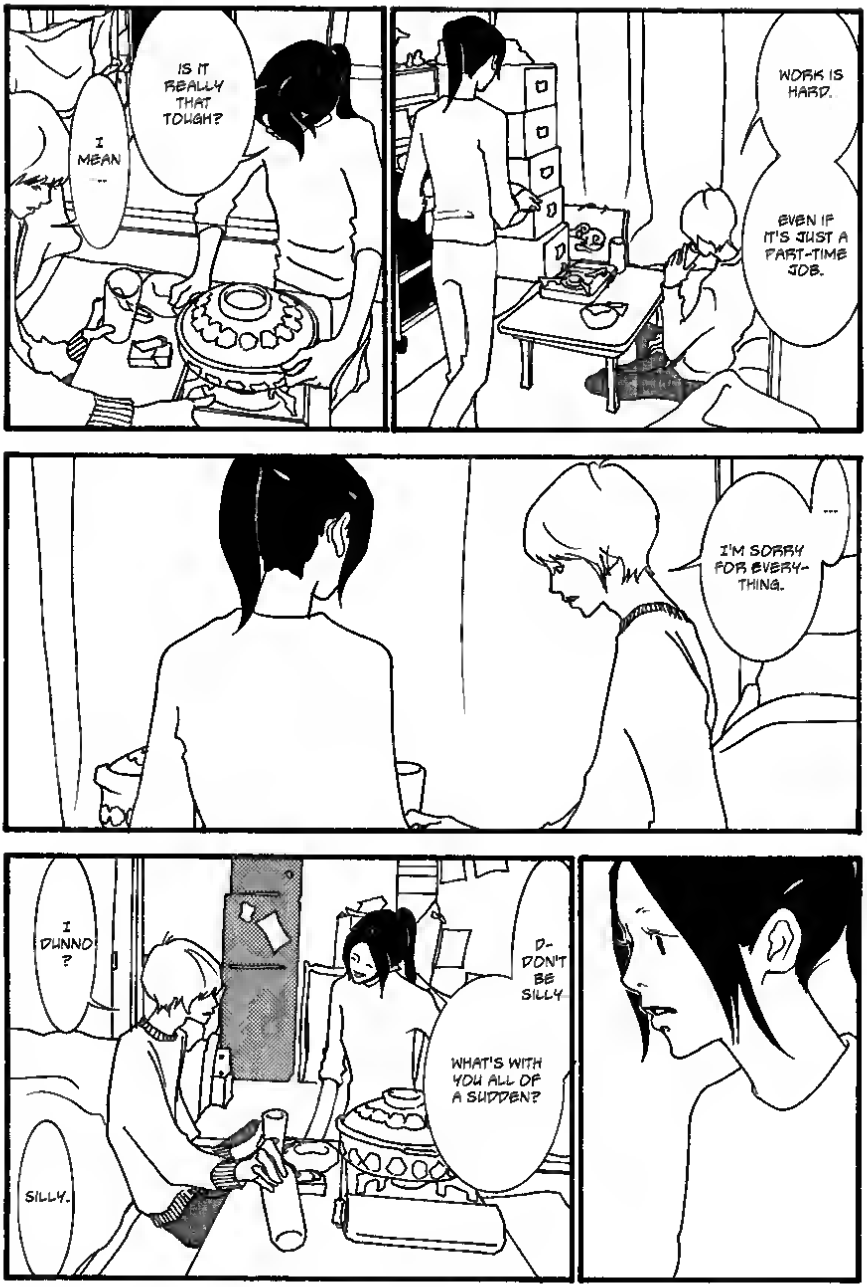


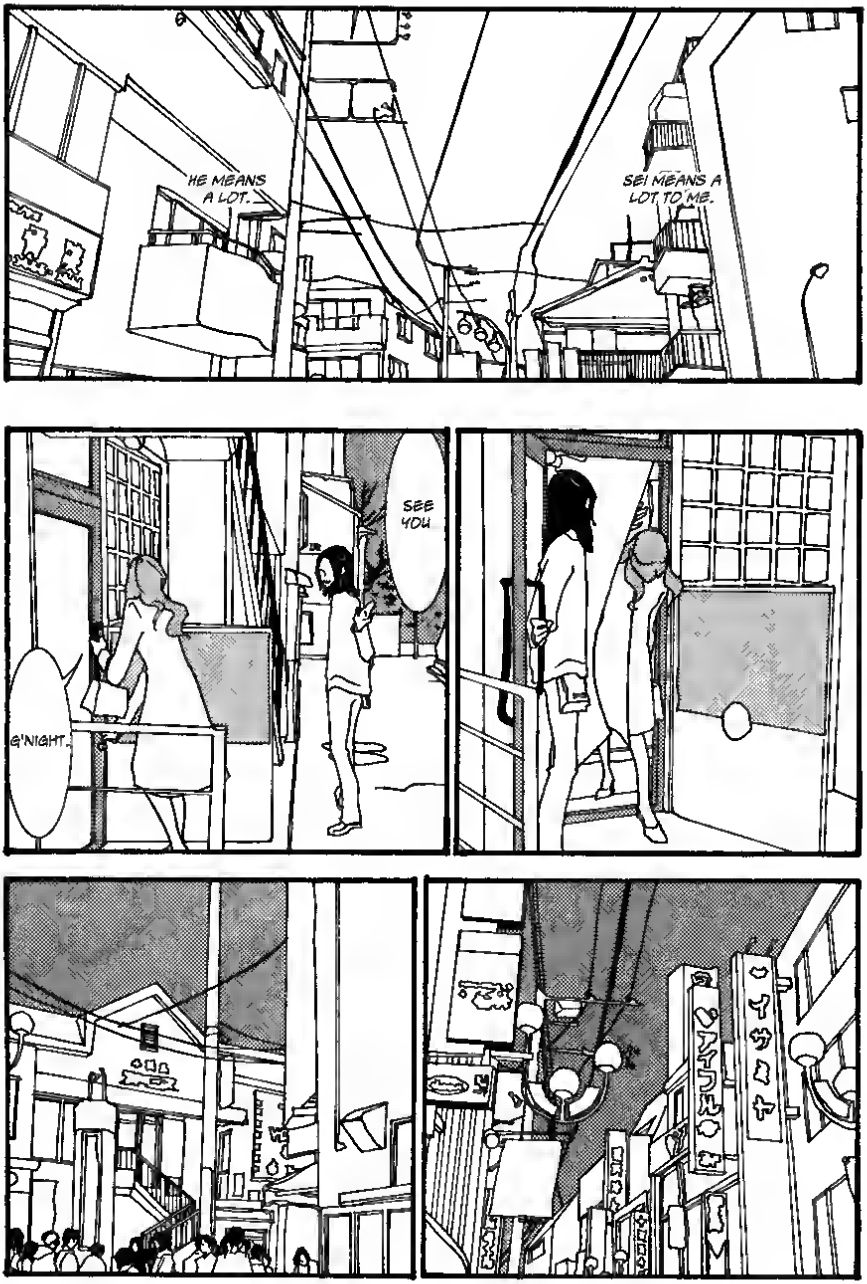


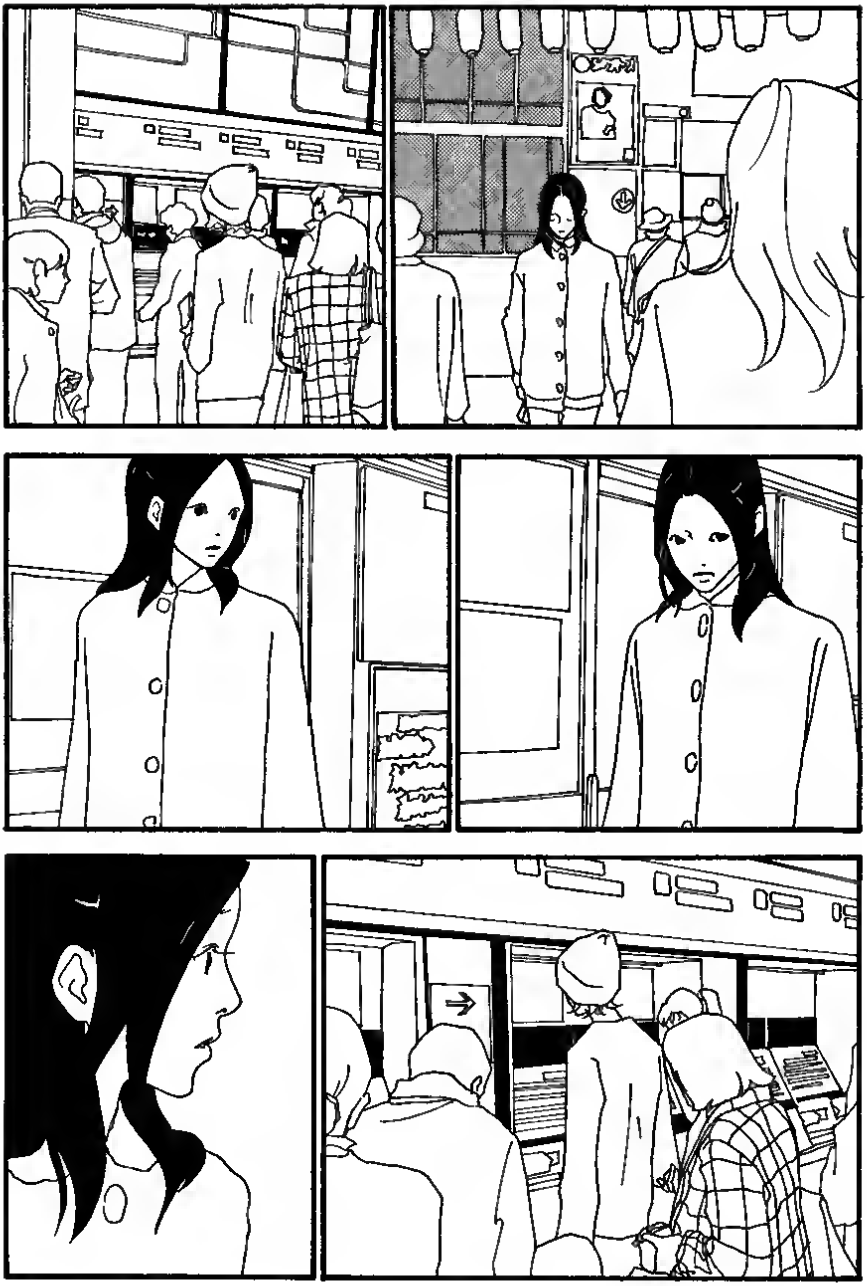


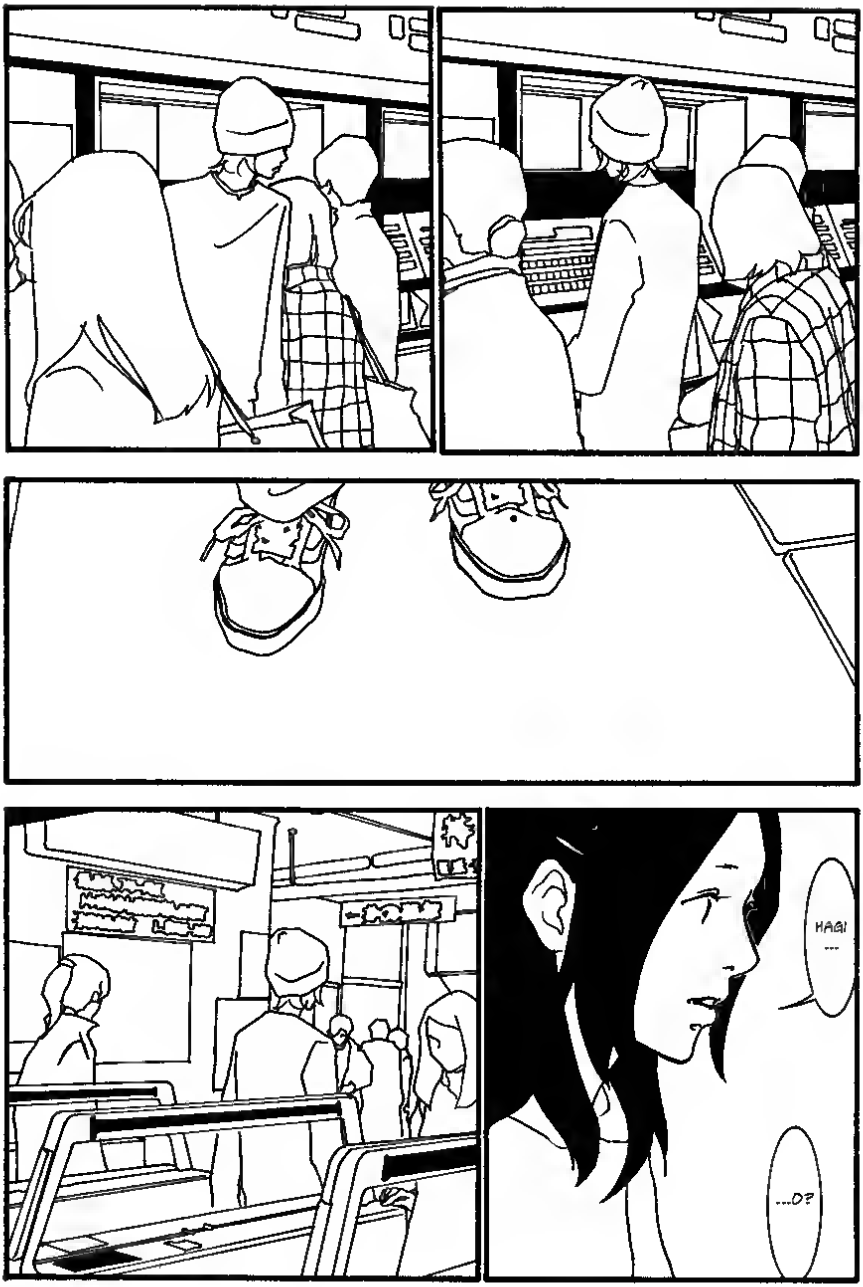
* CITRUS-SEASONED SOY SAUCE

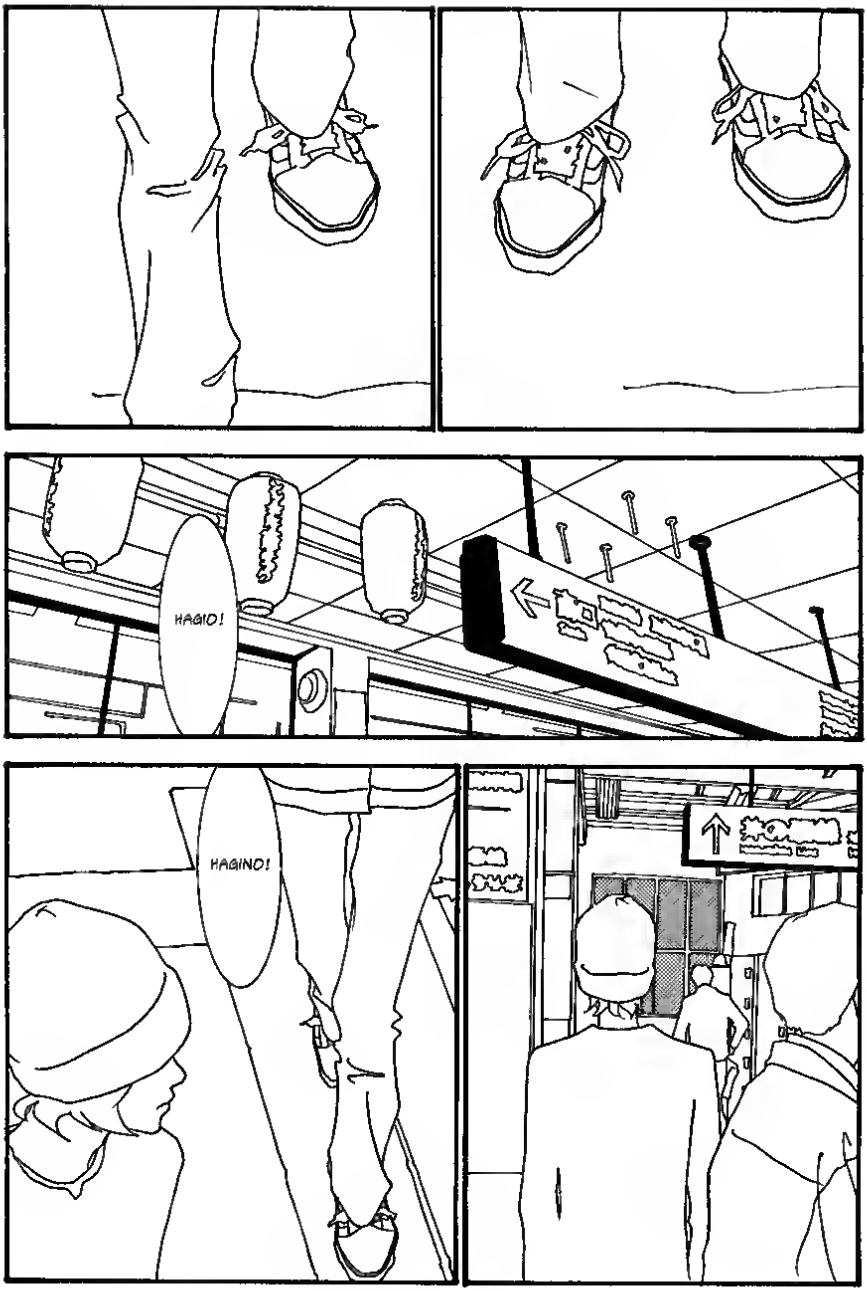

ENKA.
WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITH YOU?
HA HA HA!
I GUESS ...
...IT'S OK, THOUGH. AT LEAST YOU'RE GETTING ALONG.
I WAS STUCK IN THE MIDDLE AND HE WAS LISTENING TO ENKA.
CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT OLD MAN?
BUT, LIKE ...
IT'S NOT EVEN ABOUT HIM, YOU KNOW?
YEAH.
DID YOU TURN ON THE BURNER?

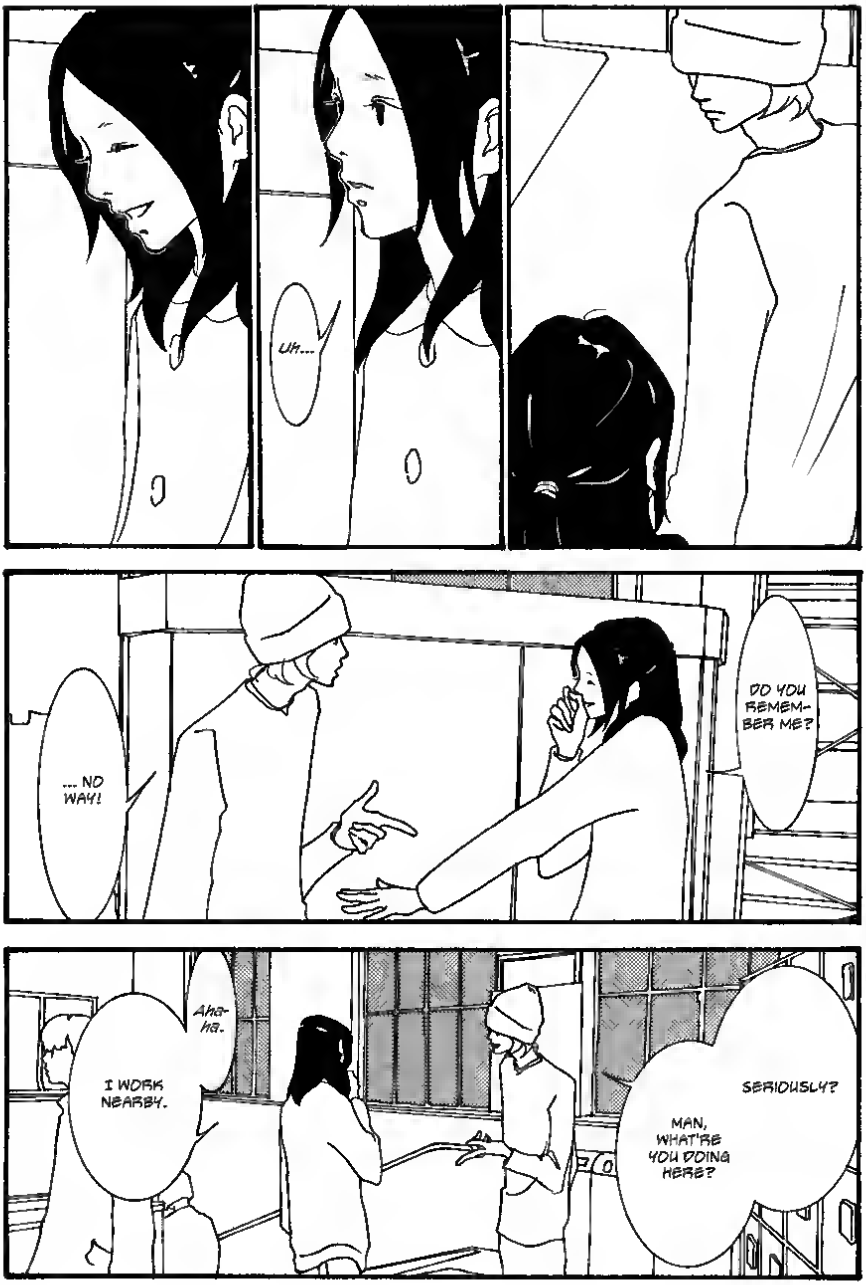

I MEAN ...
IS IT REALLY THAT TOUGH?
WORK IS HARD.
EVEN IF IT'S JUST A PART-TIME JOB.
...
I'M SORRY FOR EVERY-THING.
I DUNNO?
SILLY.
D-DON'T BE SILLY.
WHAT'S WITH YOU ALL OF A SUDDEN?

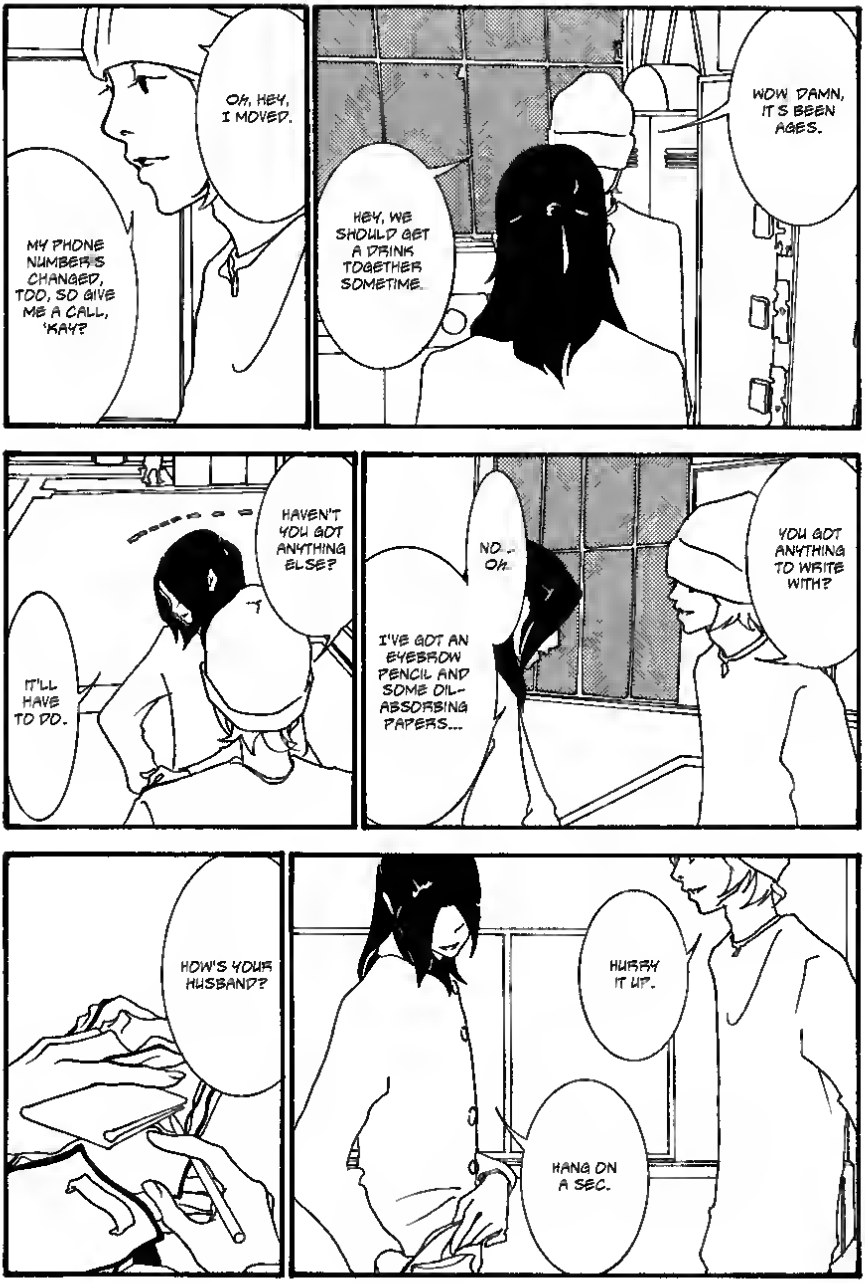

HE MEANS A LOT.
SEI MEANS A LOT TO ME.
SEE YOU
G'NIGHT.

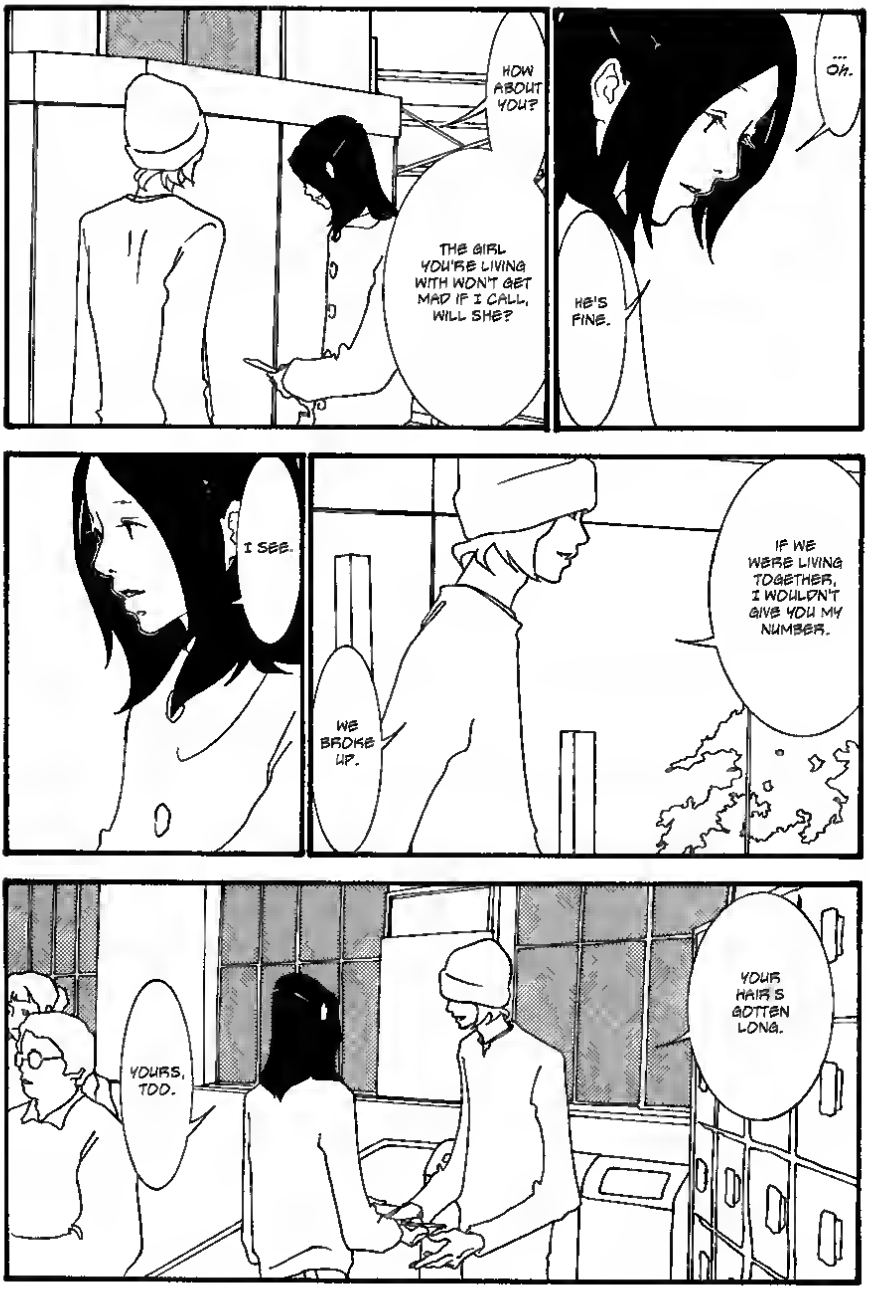


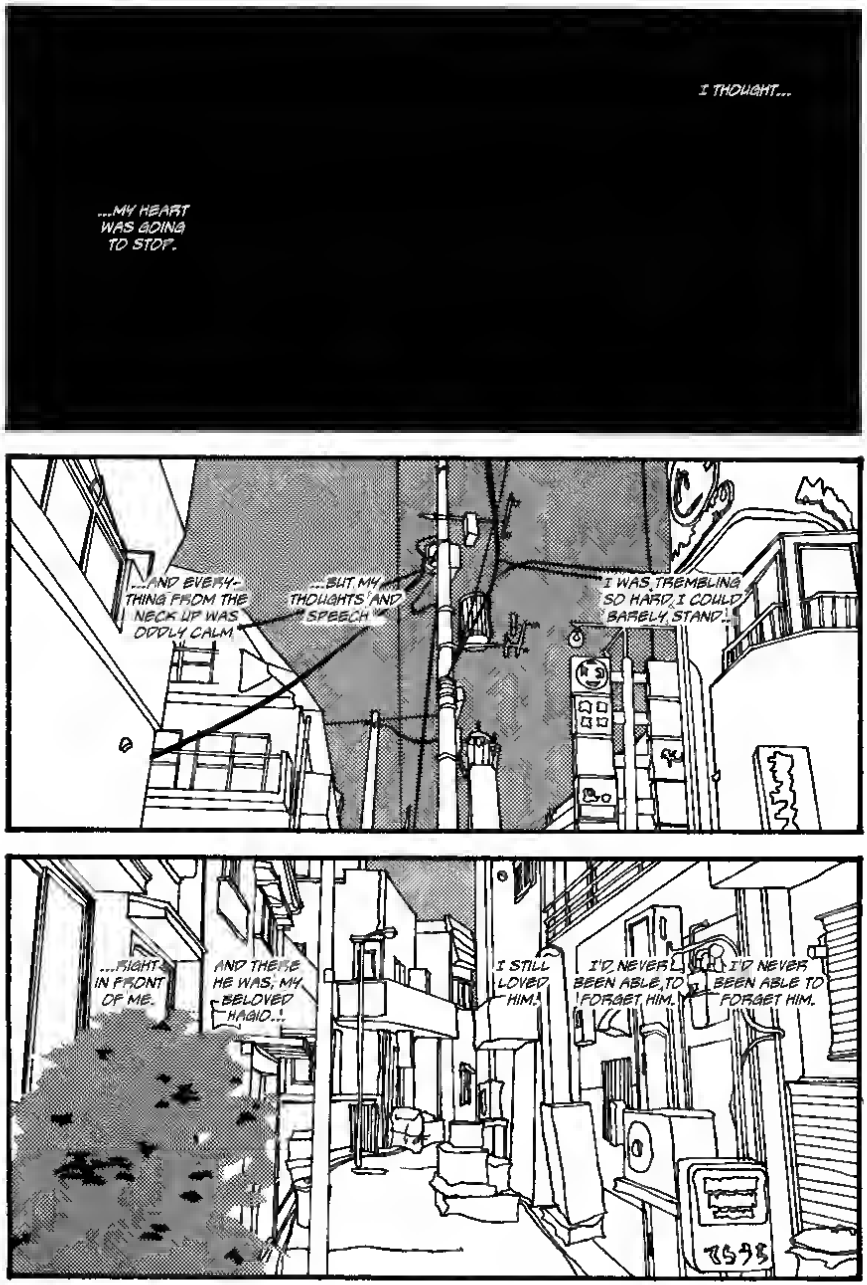

HAGI
...D?

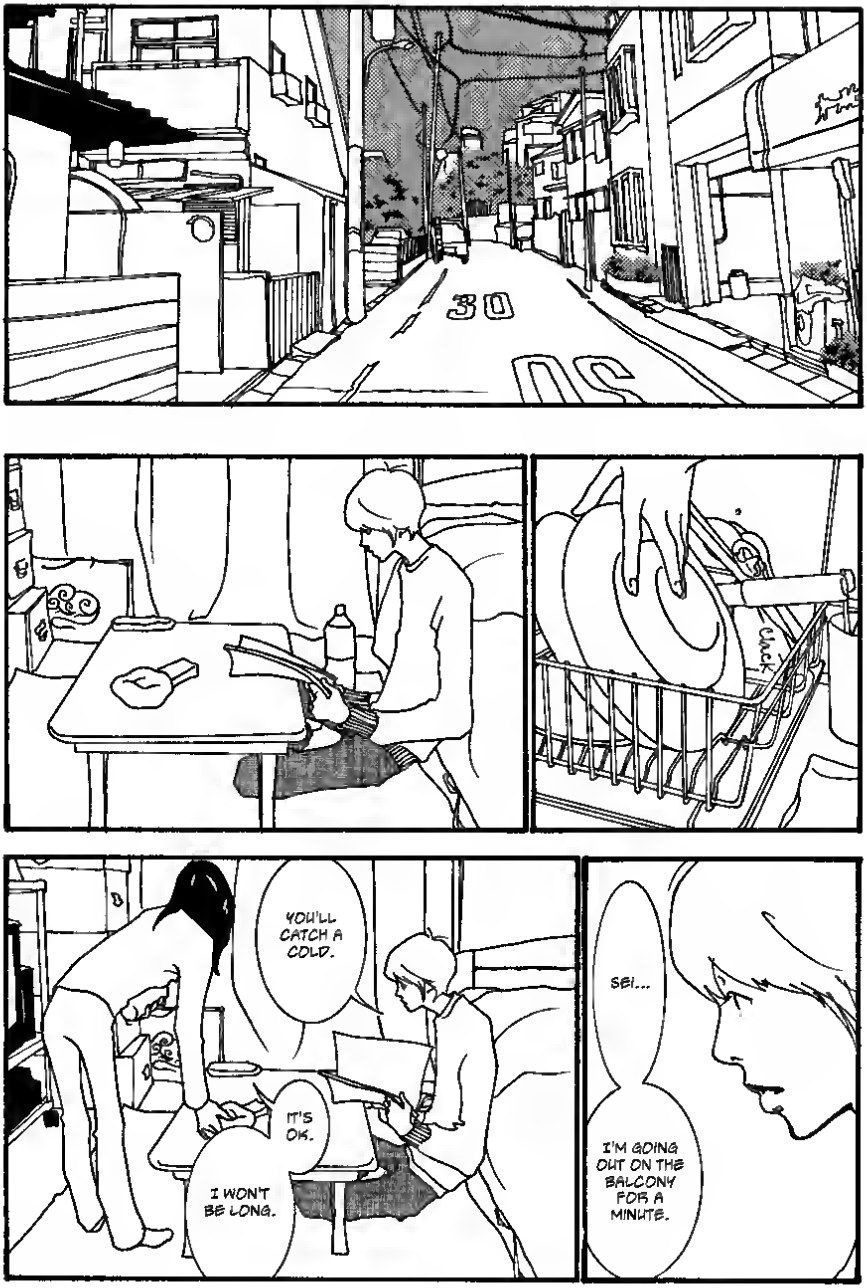

HAGIO!
HAGINO!

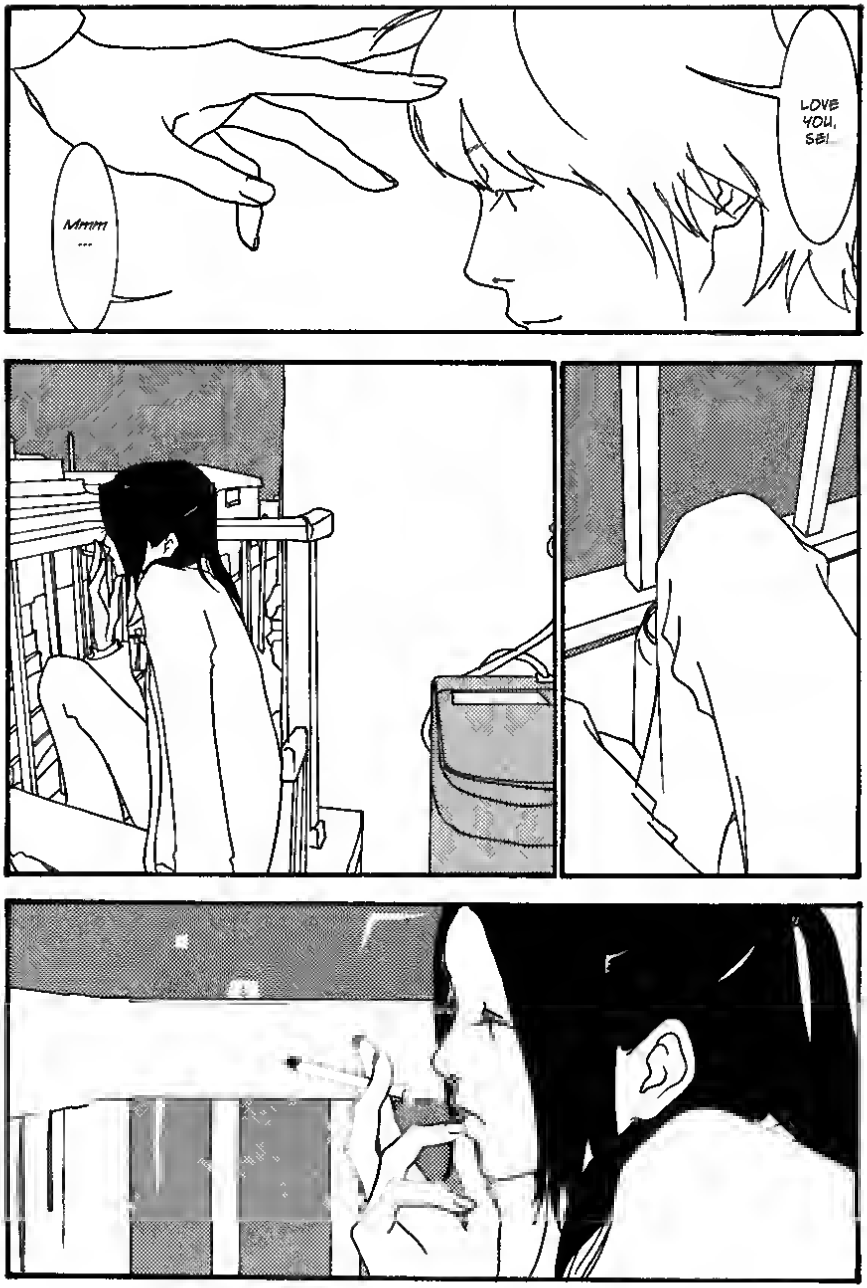

UH...
DO YOU REMEMBER ME?
... NO WAY!
AHA-HA.
I WORK NEARBY.
SERIOUSLY?
MAN, WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?


OH, HEY, I MOVED.
MY PHONE NUMBER'S CHANGED, TOO, SO GIVE ME A CALL, 'KAY?
WOW. DAMN, IT'S BEEN AGES.
HEY, WE SHOULD GET A DRINK TOGETHER SOMETIME.
HAVEN'T YOU GOT ANYTHING ELSE?
IT'LL HAVE TO DO.
NO... OH.
I'VE GOT AN EYEBROW PENCIL AND SOME OIL-ABSORBING PAPERS...
YOU GOT ANYTHING TO WRITE WITH?
HOW'S YOUR HUSBAND?
HURRY IT UP.
HANG ON A SEC.


HOW ABOUT YOU?
THE GIRL YOU'RE LIVING WITH WON'T GET MAD IF I CALL, WILL SHE?
...OH.
HE'S FINE.
I SEE.
WE BROKE UP.
IF WE WERE LIVING TOGETHER, I WOULDN'T GIVE YOU MY NUMBER.
YOURS, TOO.
YOUR HAIR'S GOTTEN LONG.


I THOUGHT...
...MY HEART WAS GOING TO STOP.
...AND EVERY-THING FROM THE NECK UP WAS ODDLY CALM.
...BUT MY THOUGHTS AND SPEECH
I WAS TREMBLING SO HARD, I COULD BARELY STAND!
...RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME.
AND THERE HE WAS, MY BELOVED HAGIO...!
I STILL LOVED HIM!
I'D NEVER BEEN ABLE TO FORGET HIM.
I'D NEVER BEEN ABLE TO FORGET HIM.


30
clack
SEI...
I'M GOING OUT ON THE BALCONY FOR A MINUTE.
YOU'LL CATCH A COLD.
IT'S OK.
I WON'T BE LONG.


LOVE YOU, SEI
Mmm ...

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Lettered by
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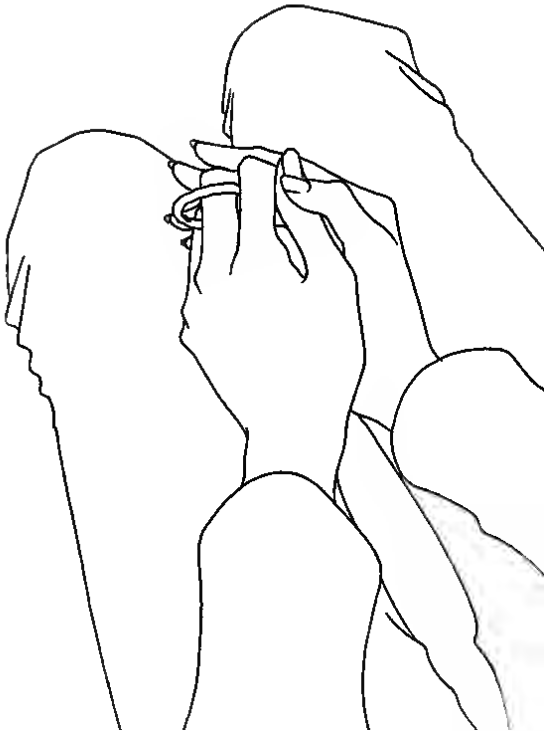
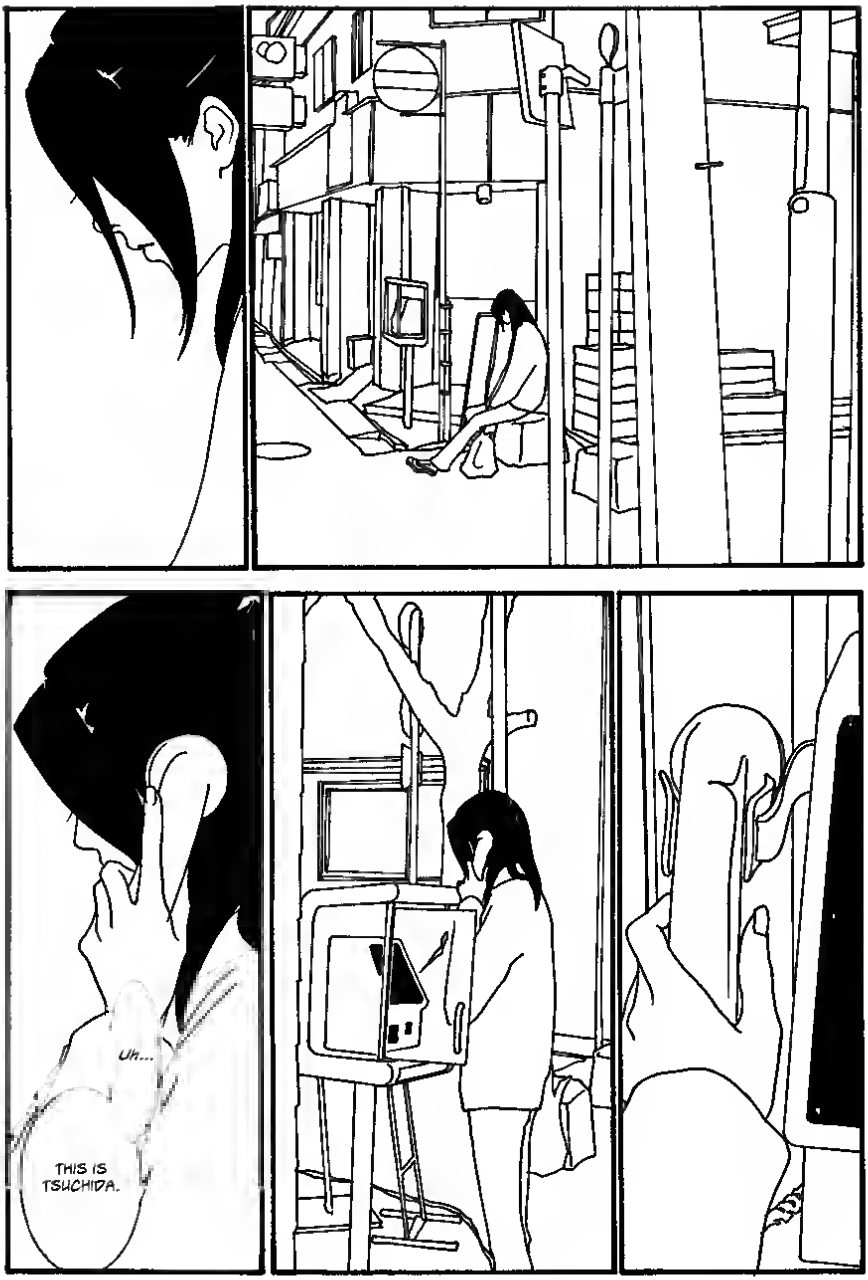
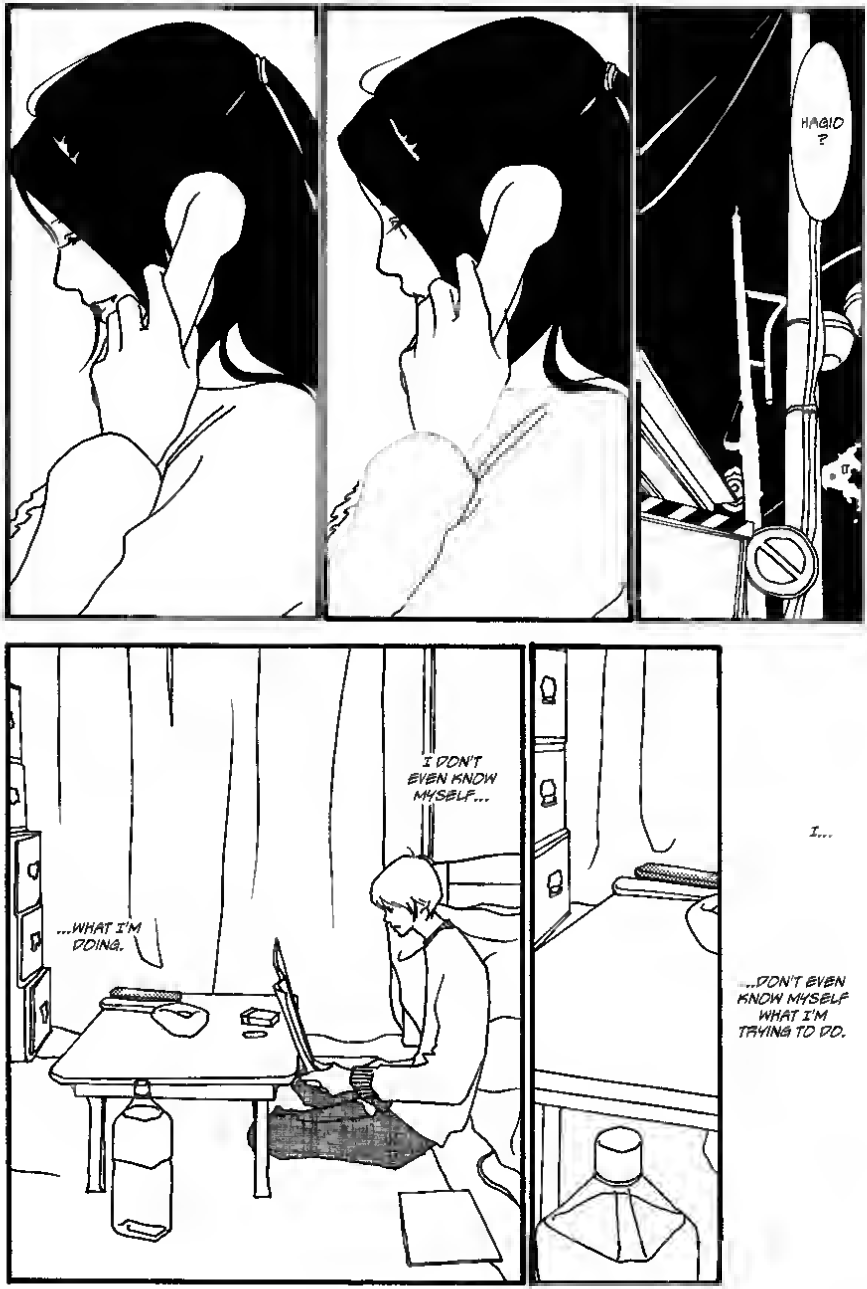
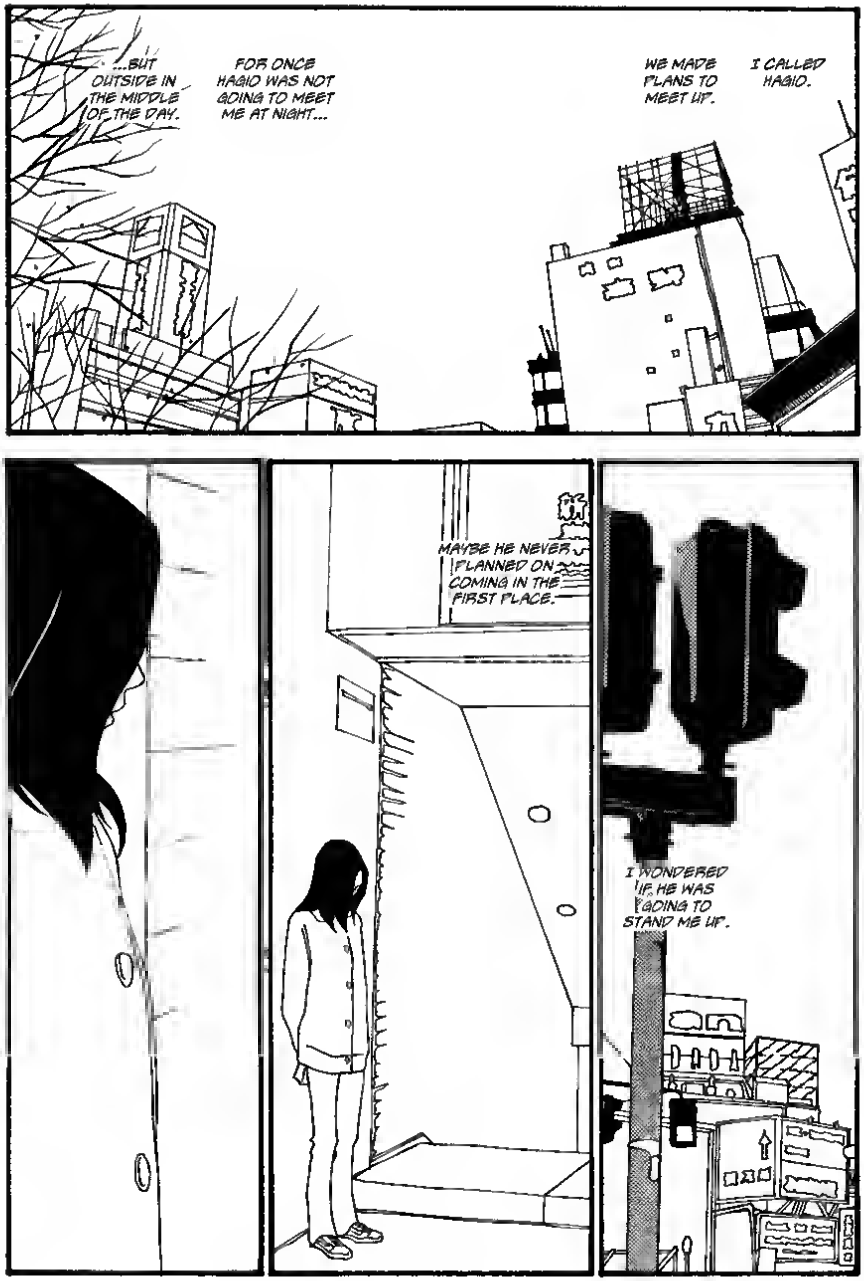
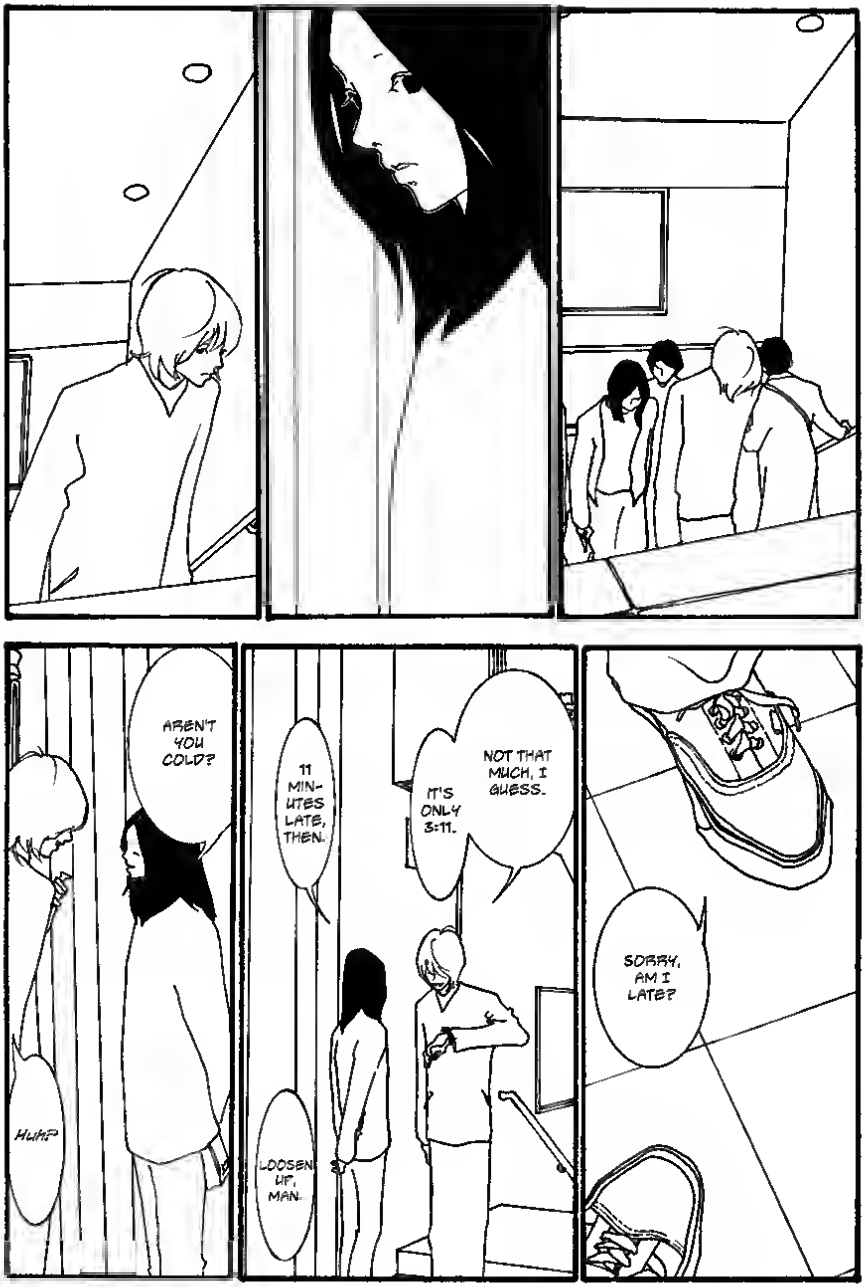


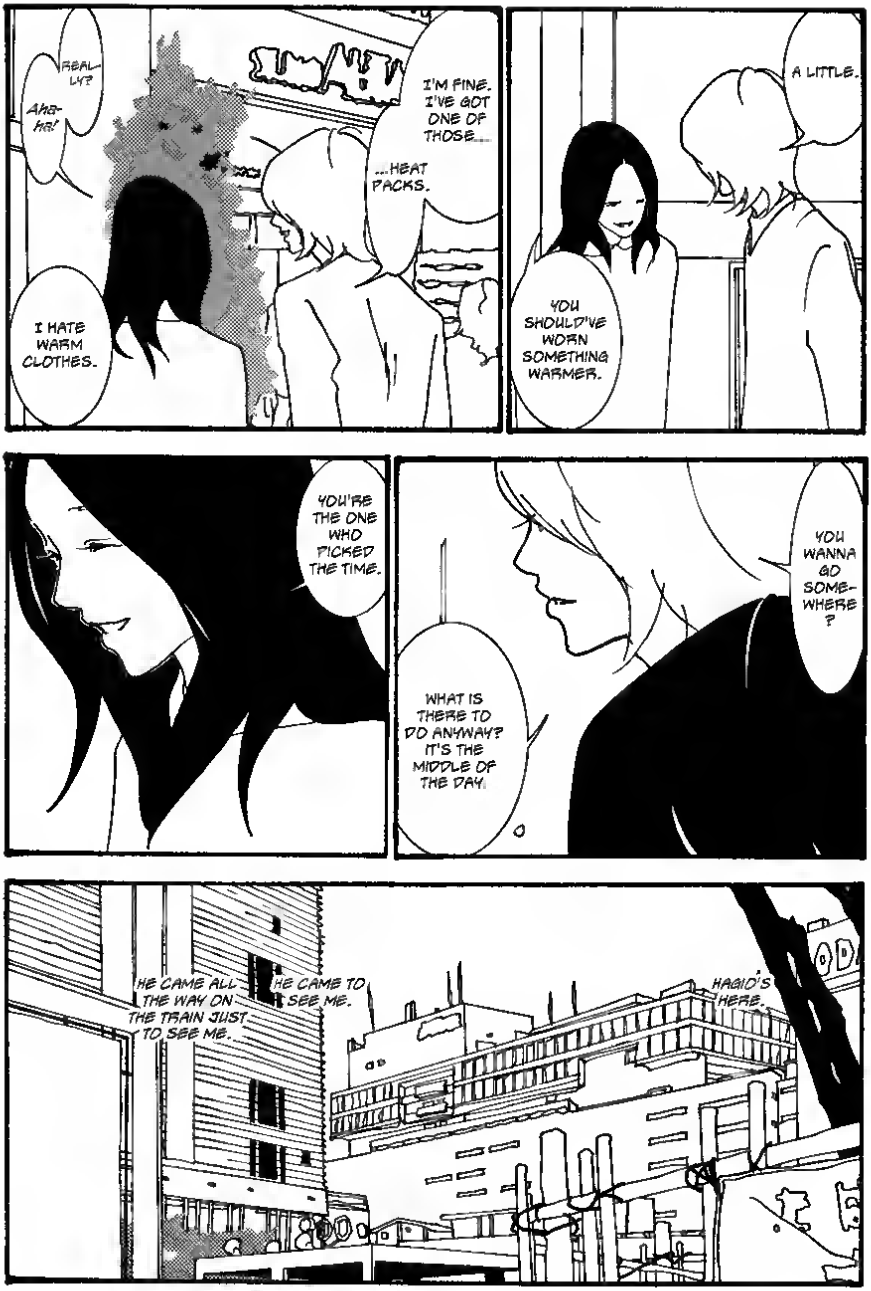
Chapter 6

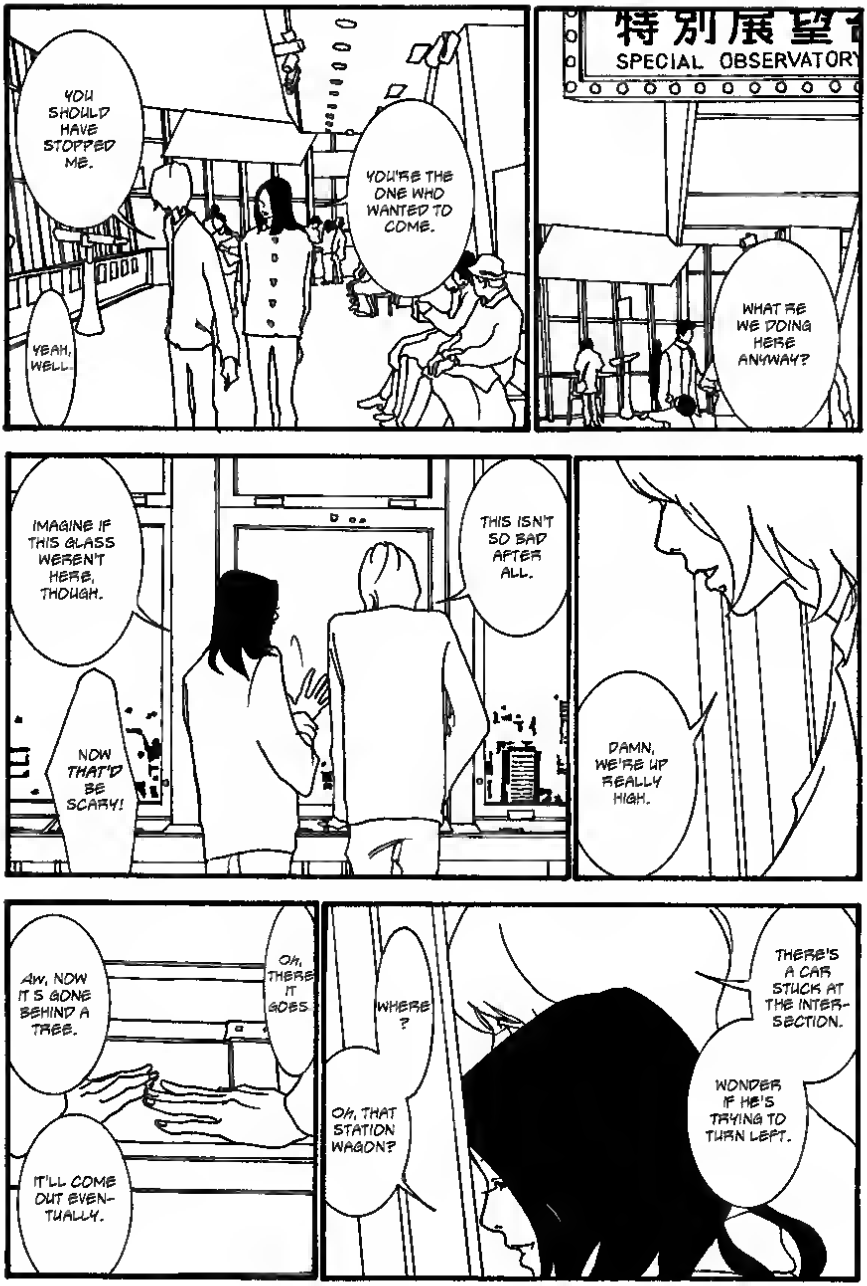

Uh...
THIS IS TSUCHIDA.

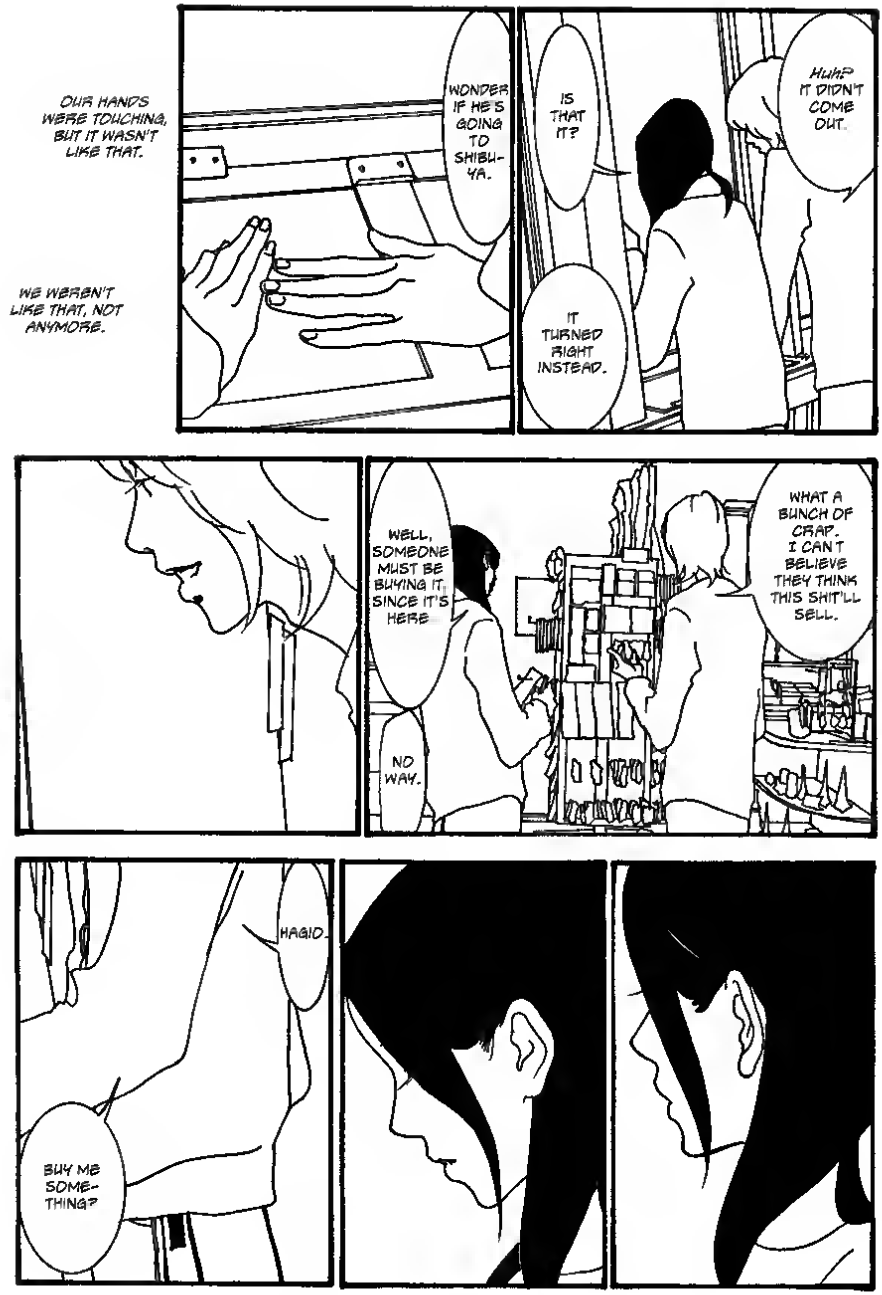

HAGID
?
I DON'T EVEN KNOW MYSELF...
...WHAT I'M DOING.
I...
...DON'T EVEN KNOW MYSELF WHAT I'M TRYING TO DO.

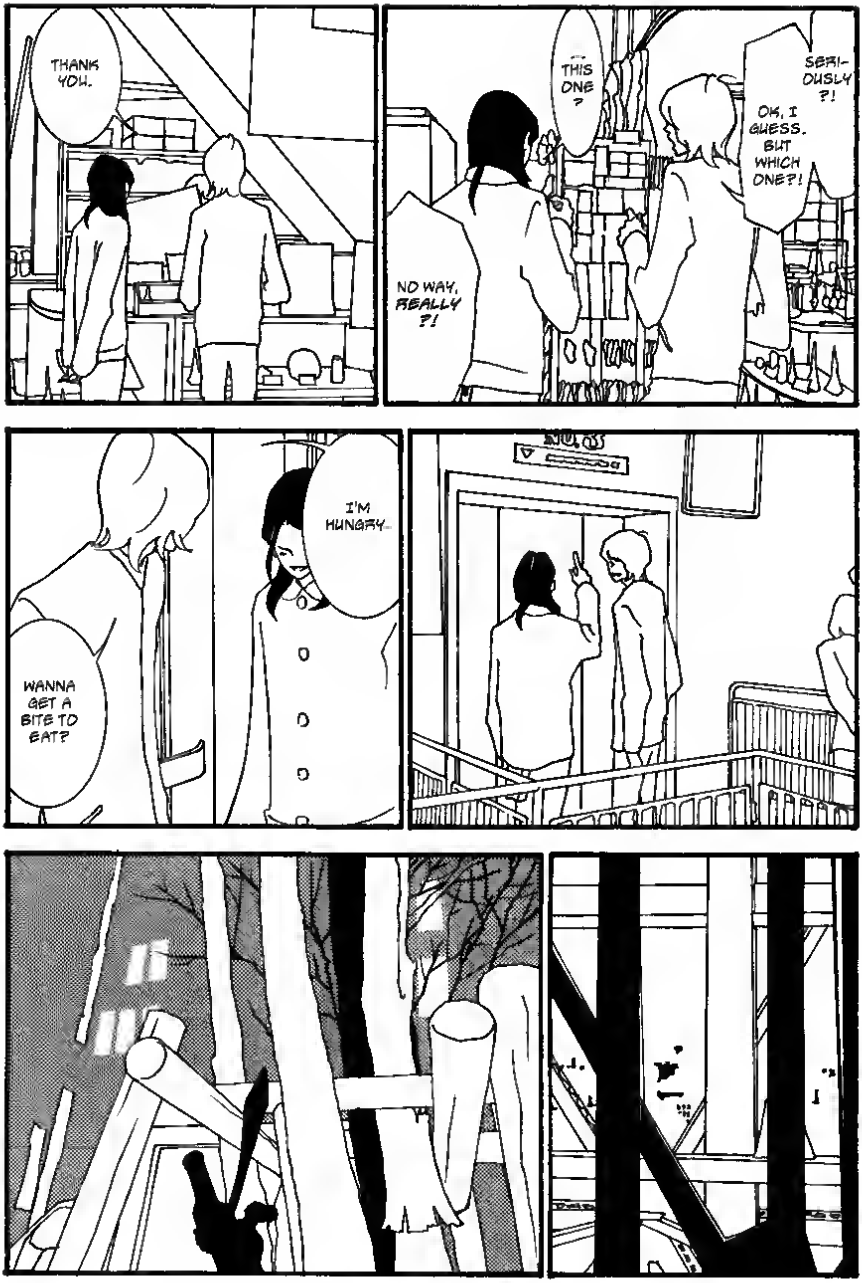

...BUT OUTSIDE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY.
FOR ONCE HAGIO WAS NOT GOING TO MEET ME AT NIGHT...
WE MADE PLANS TO MEET UP.
I CALLED HAGIO.
OH
MAYBE HE NEVER PLANNED ON COMING IN THE FIRST PLACE.
I WONDERED IF HE WAS GOING TO STAND ME UP.

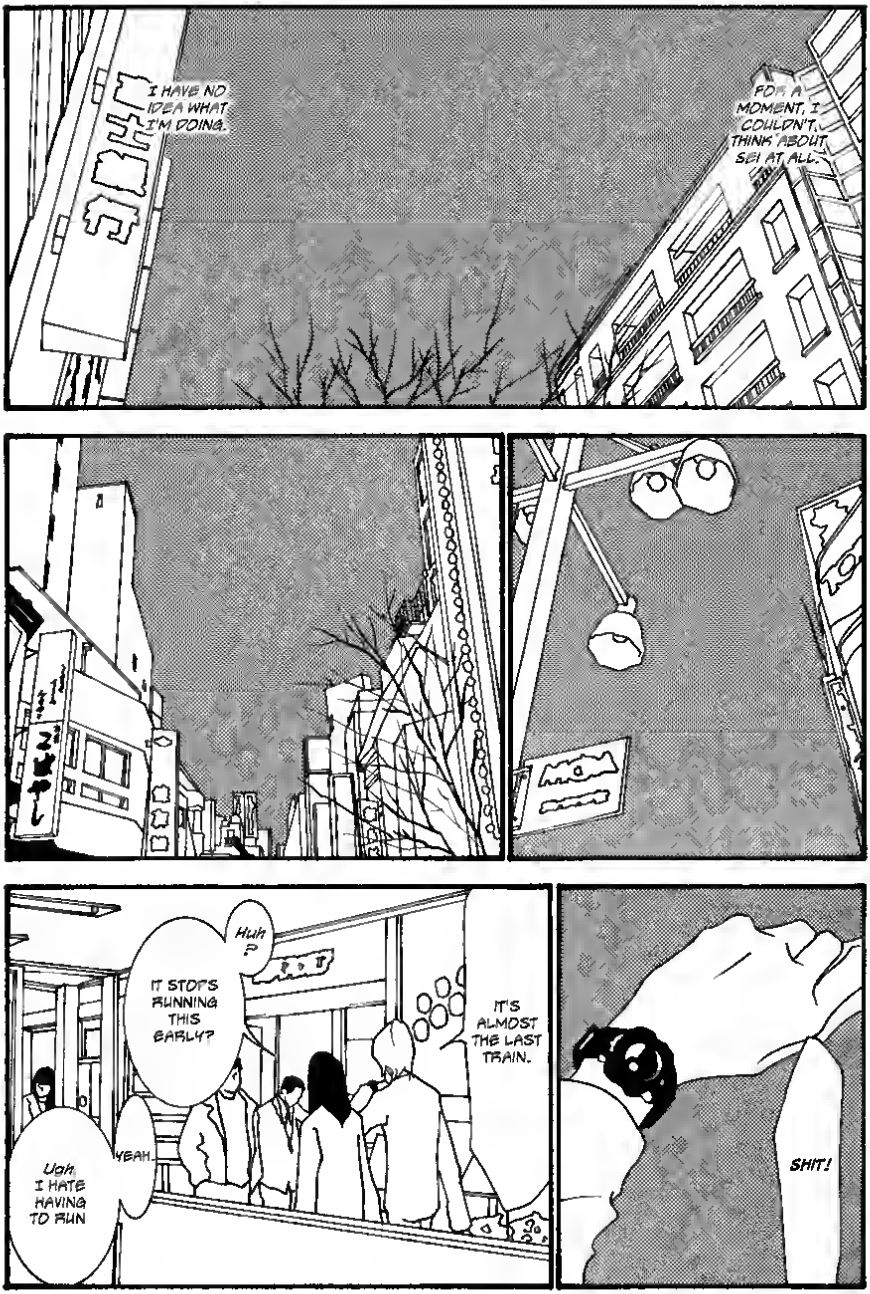

AREN'T YOU COLD?
HUH?
11 MINUTES LATE, THEN.
LOOSEN UP, MAN.
IT'S ONLY 3:11.
NOT THAT MUCH, I GUESS.
SORRY, AM I LATE?

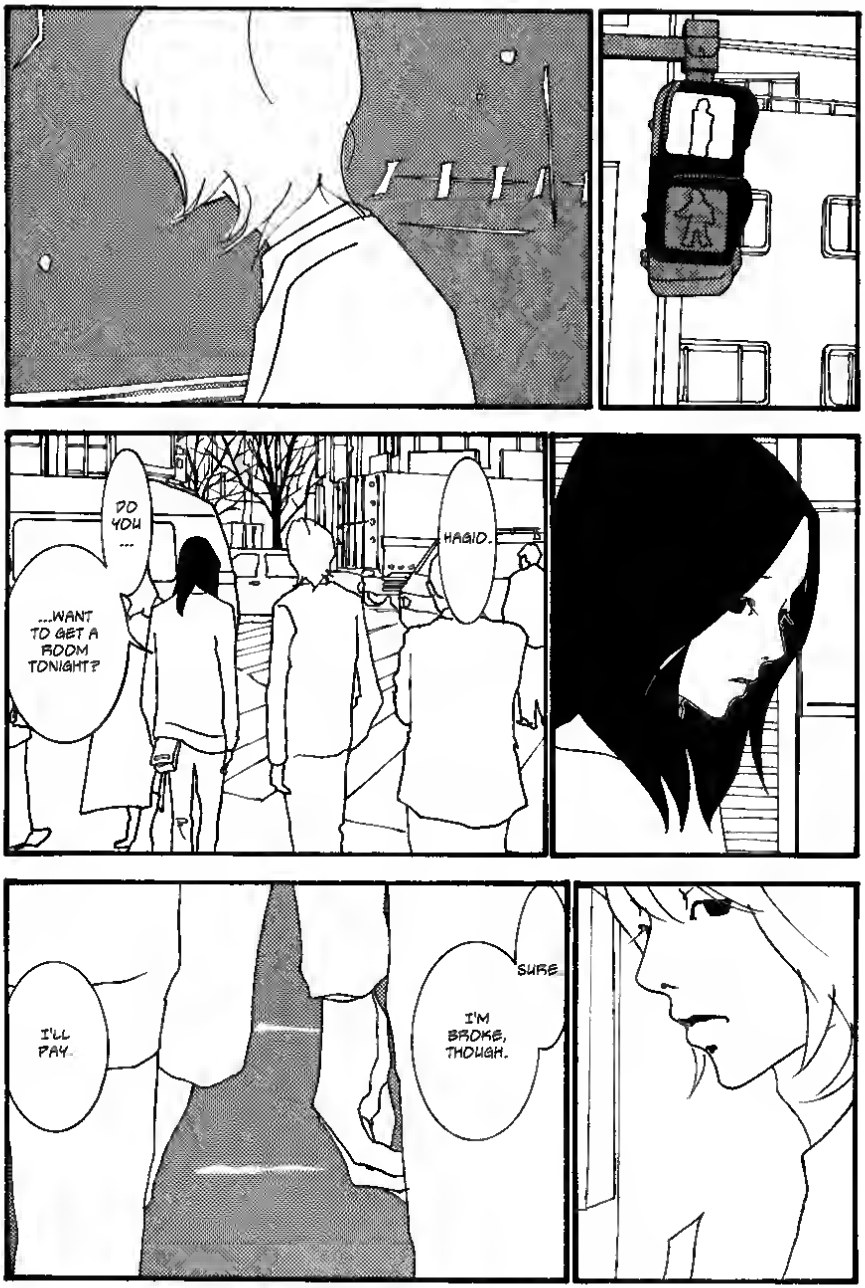

I'M FINE. I'VE GOT ONE OF THOSE...
...HEAT PACKS.
REALLY?
AHA-HA!
I HATE WARM CLOTHES.
A LITTLE.
YOU SHOULD'VE WORN SOMETHING WARMER.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO PICKED THE TIME.
YOU WANNA GO SOMEWHERE?
WHAT IS THERE TO DO ANYWAY? IT'S THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY.
HE CAME ALL THE WAY ON THE TRAIN JUST TO SEE ME.
HE CAME TO SEE ME.
HAGIO'S HERE.

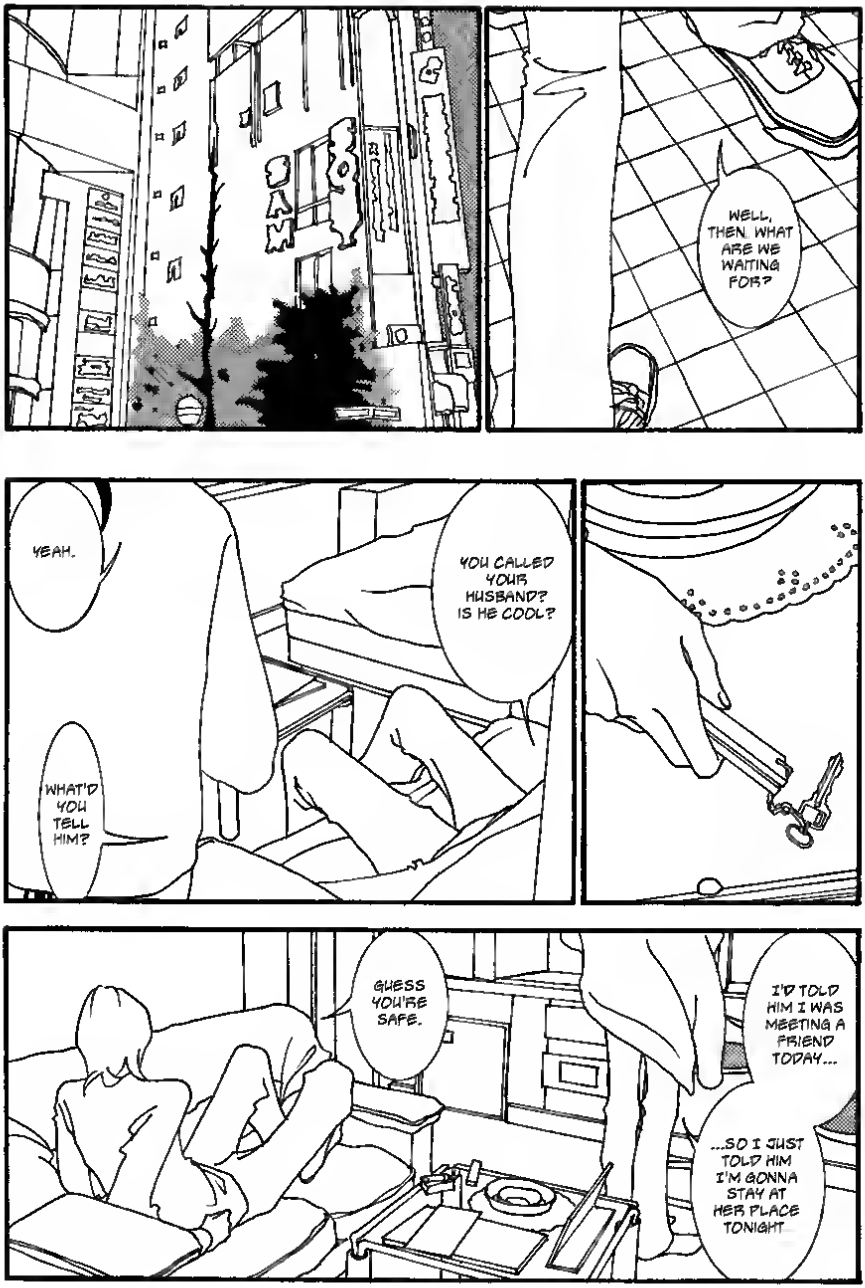

YOU SHOULD HAVE STOPPED ME.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WANTED TO COME.
YEAH, WELL.
特別展望
SPECIAL OBSERVATORY
WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE ANYWAY?
IMAGINE IF THIS GLASS WEREN'T HERE, THOUGH.
NOW THAT'D BE SCARY!
THIS ISN'T SO BAD AFTER ALL.
DAMN, WE'RE UP REALLY HIGH.
AW, NOW IT'S GONE BEHIND A TREE.
OH, THERE IT GOES.
IT'LL COME OUT EVENTUALLY.
WHERE?
OH, THAT STATION WAGON?
THERE'S A CAR STUCK AT THE INTERSECTION.
WONDER IF HE'S TRYING TO TURN LEFT.

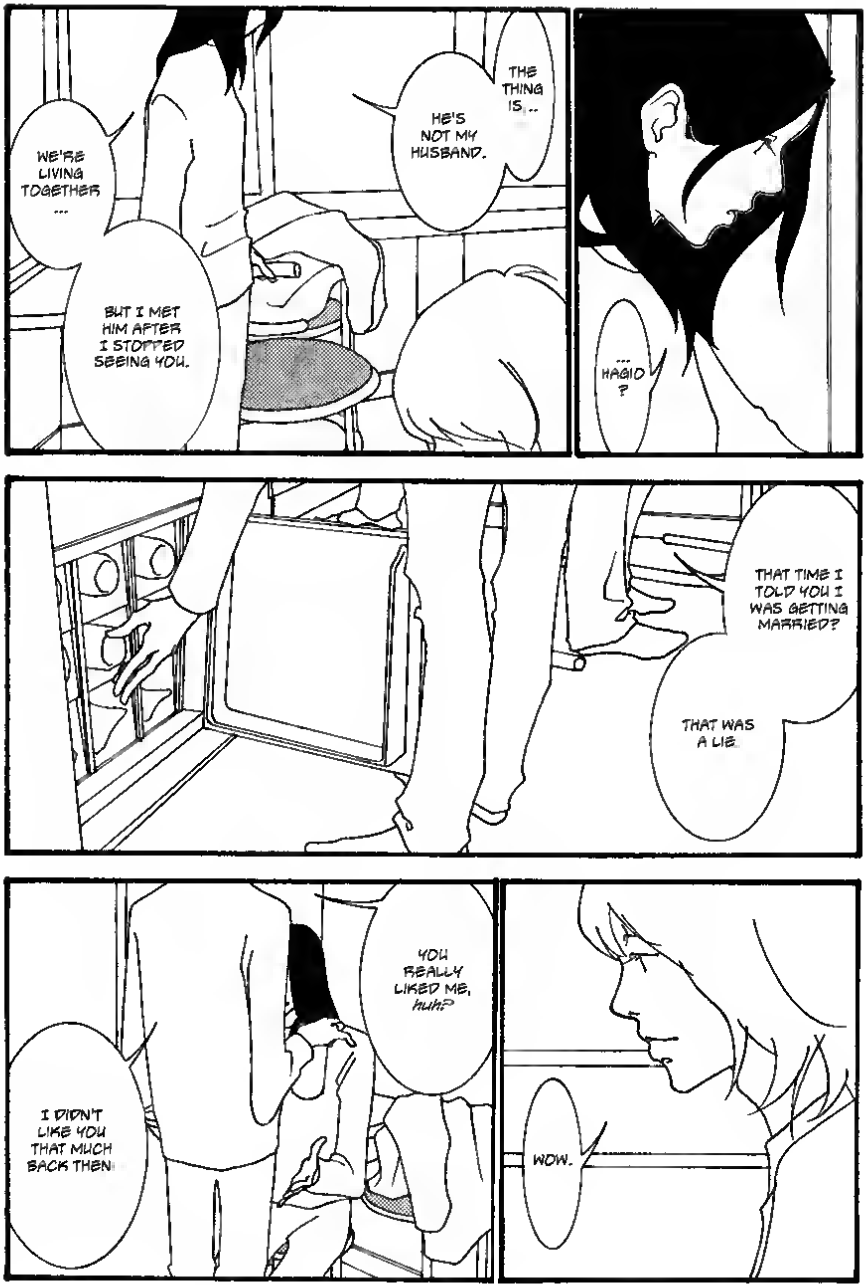

OUR HANDS WERE TOUCHING, BUT IT WASN'T LIKE THAT.
WE WEREN'T LIKE THAT, NOT ANYMORE.
I WONDER IF HE'S GOING TO SHIBU-YA.
IS THAT IT?
IT TURNED RIGHT INSTEAD.
HUH? IT DIDN'T COME OUT.
WELL, SOMEONE MUST BE BUYING IT, SINCE IT'S HERE.
NO WAY.
WHAT A BUNCH OF CRAP. I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY THINK THIS SHIT'LL SELL.
HAGIO.
BUY ME SOME-THING?

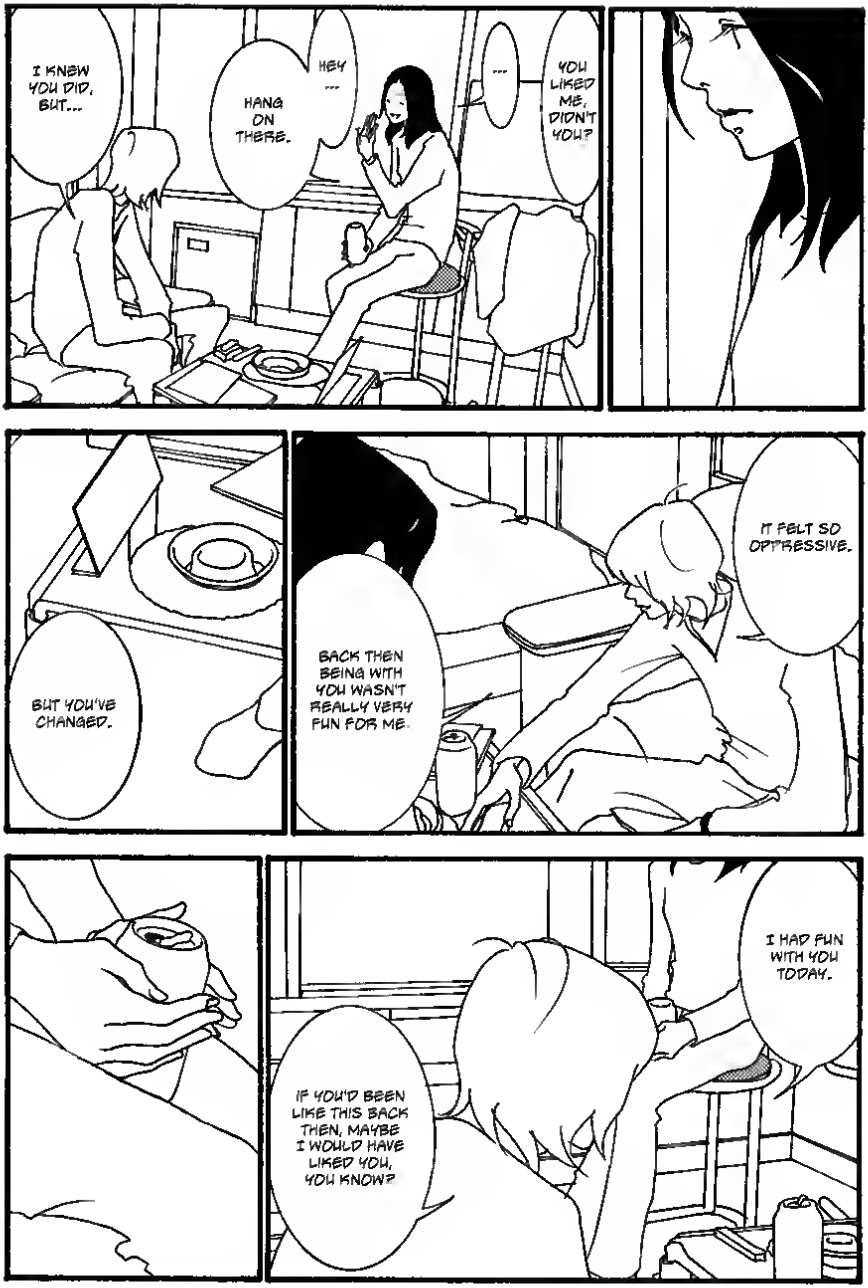

THANK YOU.
... THIS ONE?
SERIOUSLY?!
OK, I GUESS. BUT WHICH ONE?!
NO WAY, REALLY?!
I'M HUNGRY...
WANNA GET A BITE TO EAT?

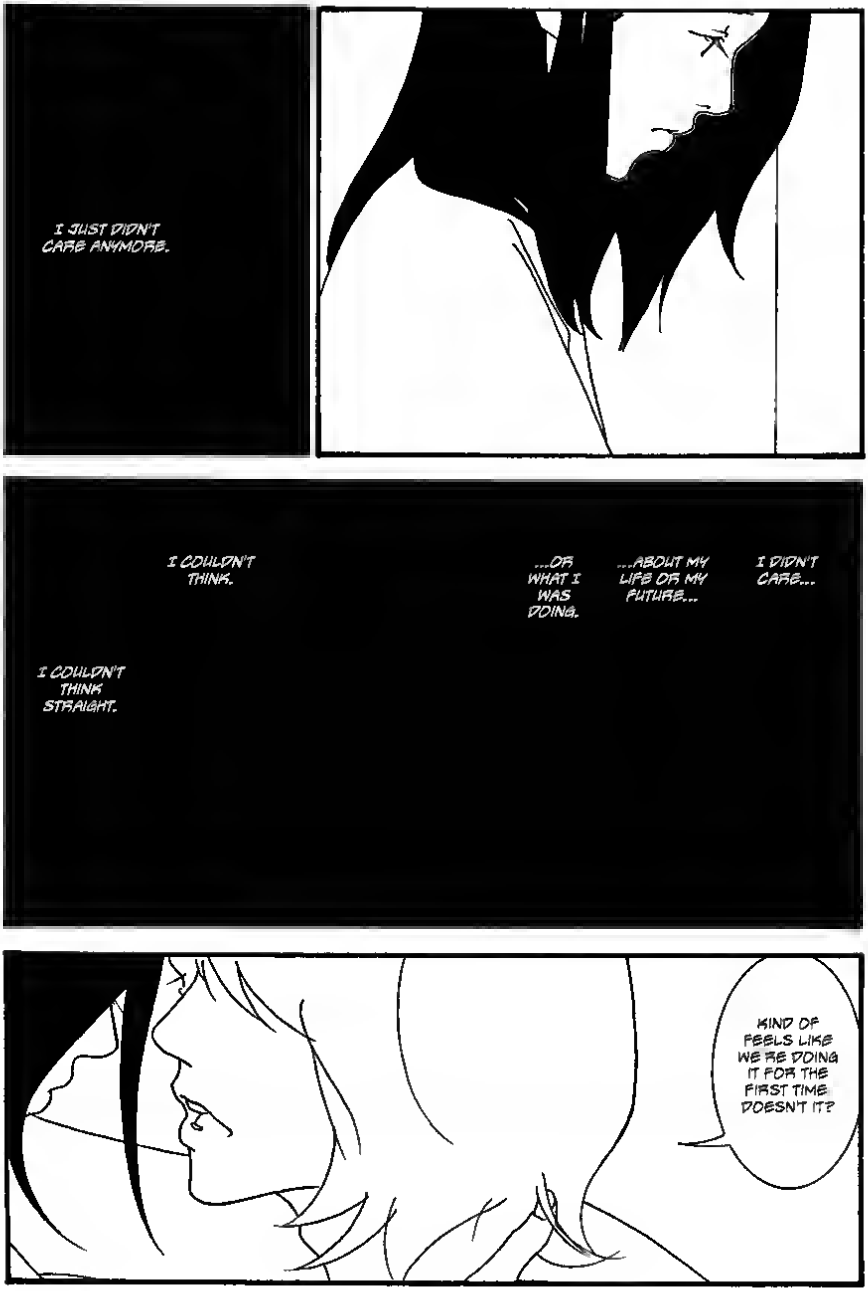

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I'M DOING.
FOR A MOMENT, I COULDN'T THINK ABOUT SEI AT ALL.
IT'S ALMOST THE LAST TRAIN.
Huh?
IT STOPS RUNNING THIS EARLY?
YEAH.
Ugh, I HATE HAVING TO RUN
SHIT!


DO YOU ...
...WANT TO GET A ROOM TONIGHT?
HAGIO.
SURE.
I'M BROKE, THOUGH.
I'LL PAY.

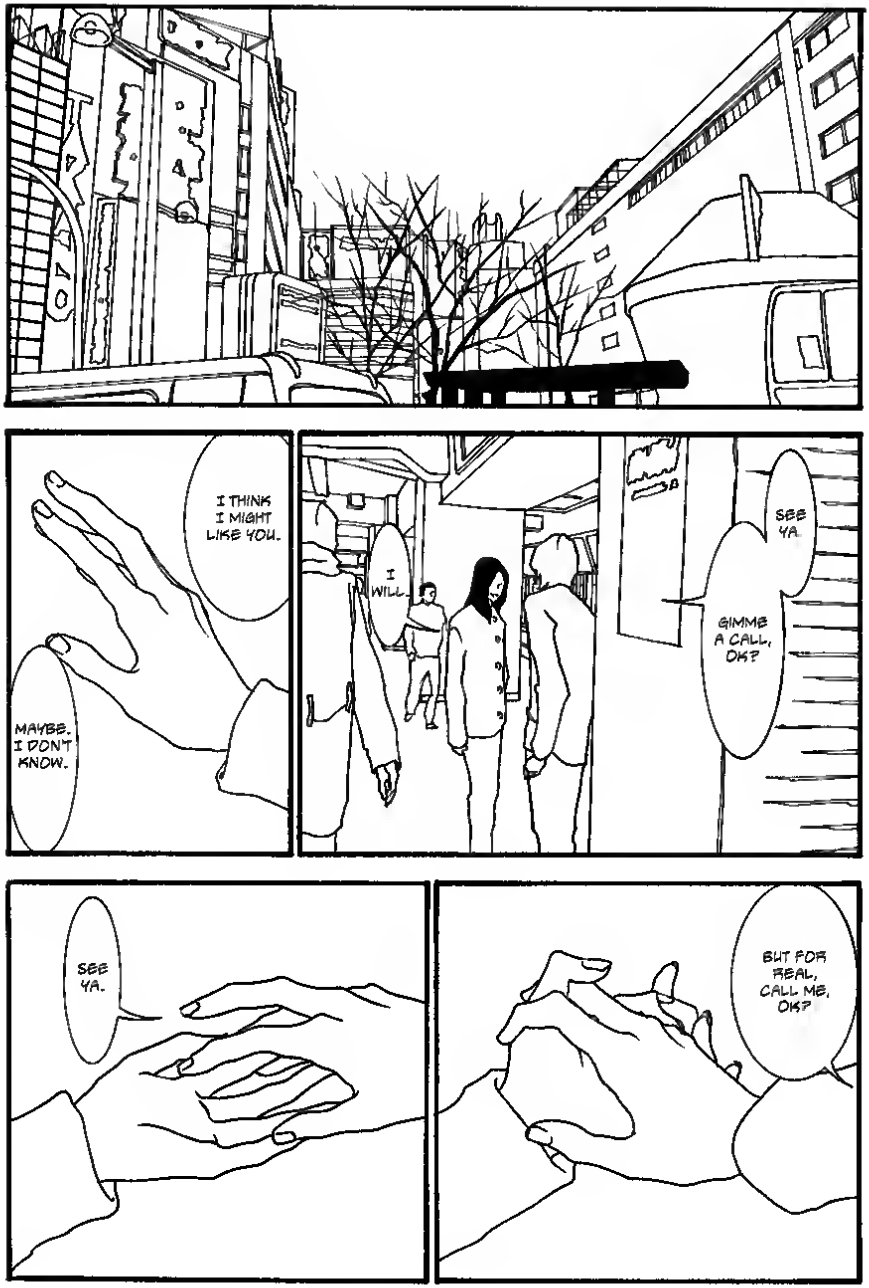

WELL, THEN. WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?
YEAH.
YOU CALLED YOUR HUSBAND? IS HE COOL?
WHAT'D YOU TELL HIM?
GUESS YOU'RE SAFE.
I'D TOLD HIM I WAS MEETING A FRIEND TODAY...
...SO I JUST TOLD HIM I'M GONNA STAY AT HER PLACE TONIGHT

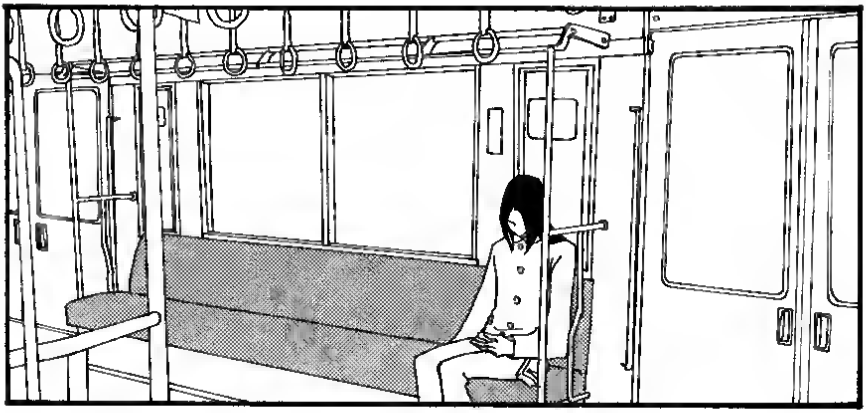

THE THING IS...
HE'S NOT MY HUSBAND.
WE'RE LIVING TOGETHER ...
BUT I MET HIM AFTER I STOPPED SEEING YOU.
... HAGIO ?
THAT TIME I TOLD YOU I WAS GETTING MARRIED?
THAT WAS A LIE.
YOU REALLY LIKED ME, HUH?
I DIDN'T LIKE YOU THAT MUCH BACK THEN!
WOW.

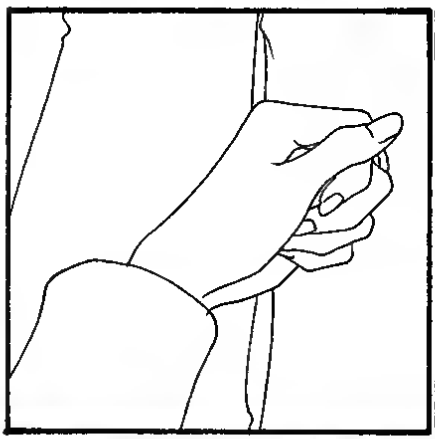

I KNEW YOU DID, BUT...
HANG ON THERE.
HEY ...
...
YOU LIKED ME, DIDN'T YOU?
BUT YOU'VE CHANGED.
BACK THEN BEING WITH YOU WASN'T REALLY VERY FUN FOR ME.
IT FELT SO OPPRESSIVE.
IF YOU'D BEEN LIKE THIS BACK THEN, MAYBE I WOULD HAVE LIKED YOU, YOU KNOW?
I HAD FUN WITH YOU TODAY.

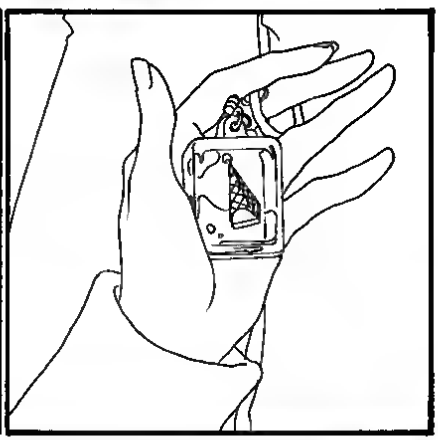

I JUST DIDN'T CARE ANYMORE.
I COULDN'T THINK.
...OF WHAT I WAS DOING.
...ABOUT MY LIFE OR MY FUTURE...
I DIDN'T CARE...
I COULDN'T THINK STRAIGHT.
KIND OF FEELS LIKE WE'RE DOING IT FOR THE FIRST TIME, DOESN'T IT?

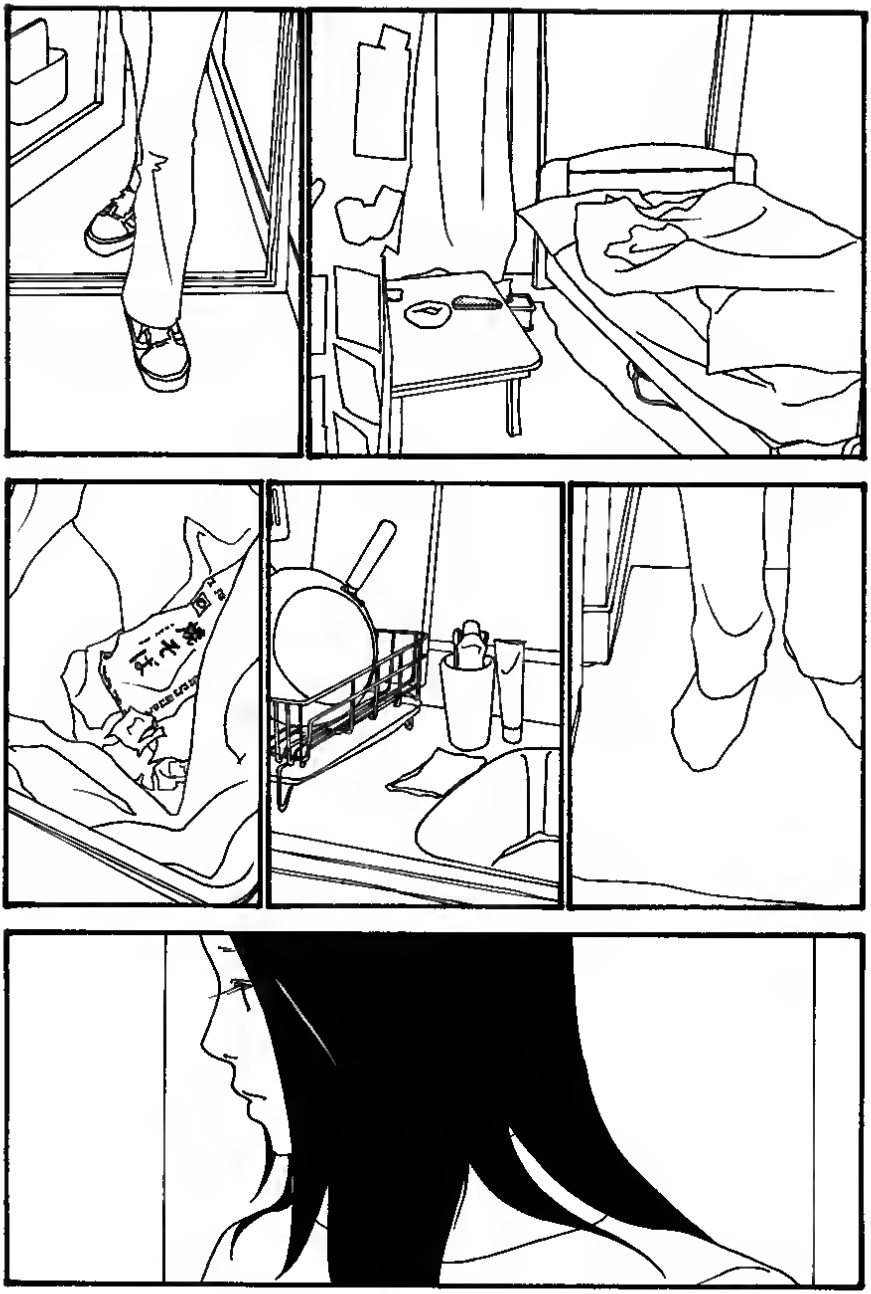
SEEING KAGIO THERE IN FRONT OF ME...
...MADE ME FEEL LIKE CRYING.
I JUST...
I JUST FELT LIKE CRYING.

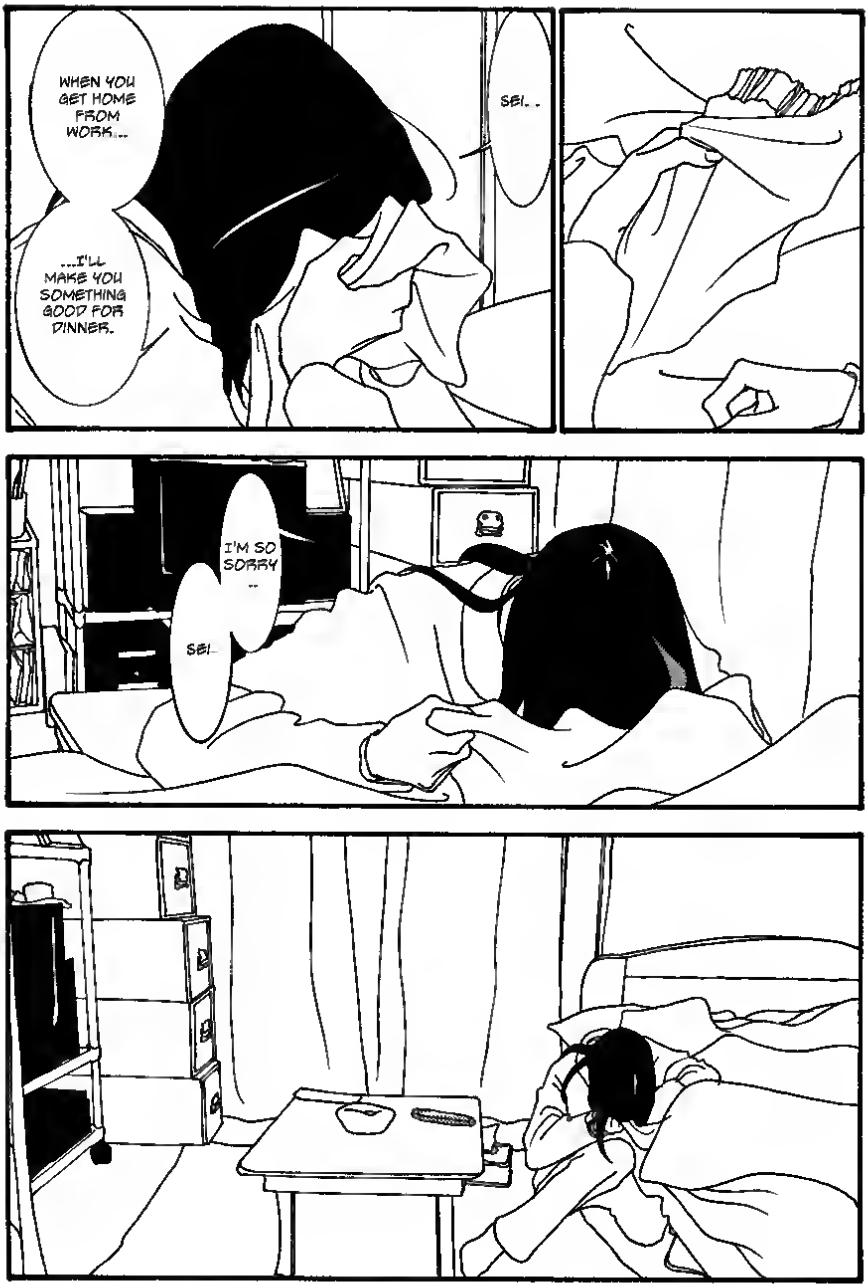

I THINK I MIGHT LIKE YOU.
MAYBE. I DON'T KNOW.
I WILL.
SEE YA.
GIMME A CALL, OK?
SEE YA.
BUT FOR REAL, CALL ME, OK?

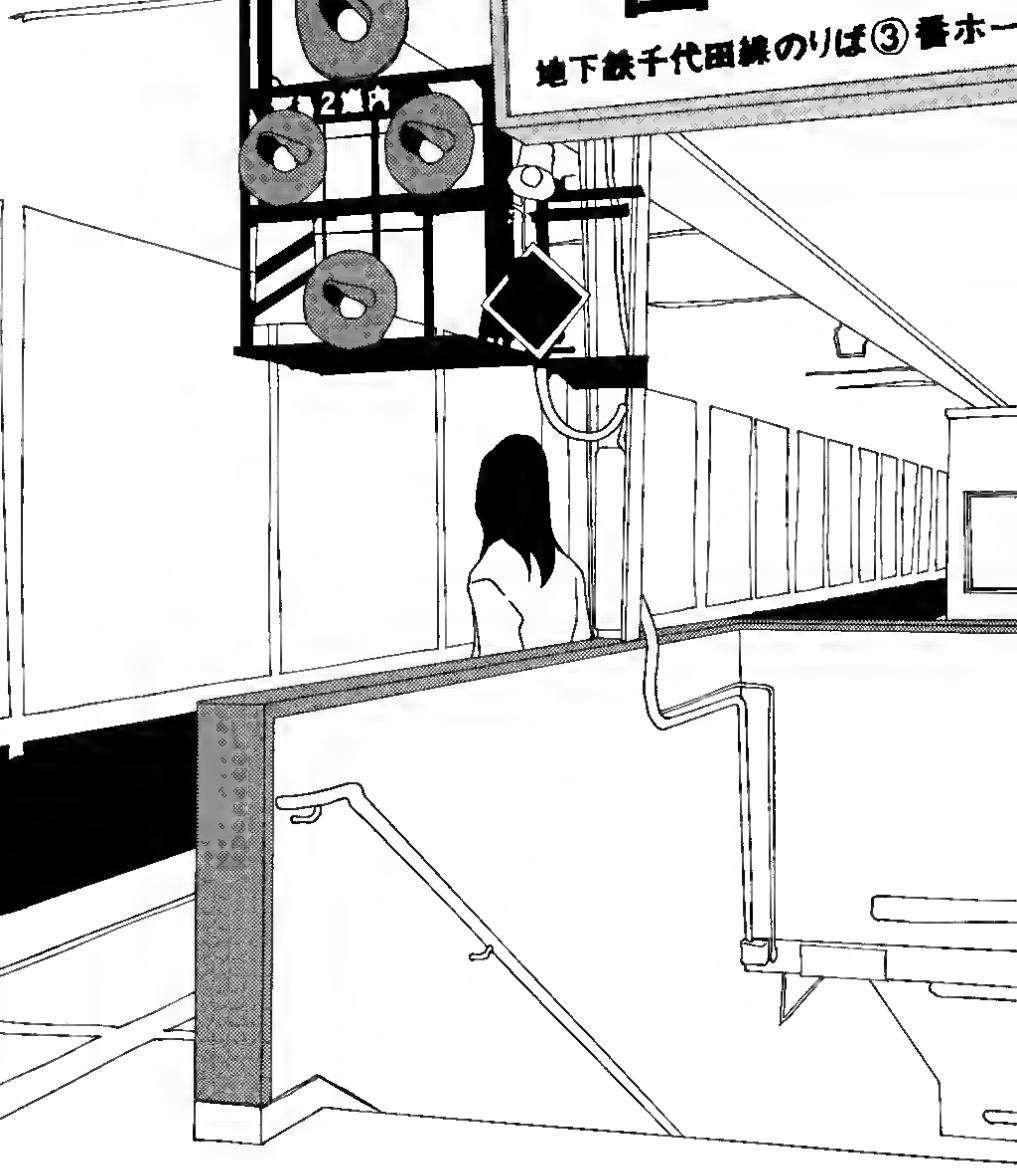









WHEN YOU GET HOME FROM WORK...
...I'LL MAKE YOU SOMETHING GOOD FOR DINNER.
SBI...
I'M SO SORRY ...
SBI...



Chapter 7

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MEGCHAN
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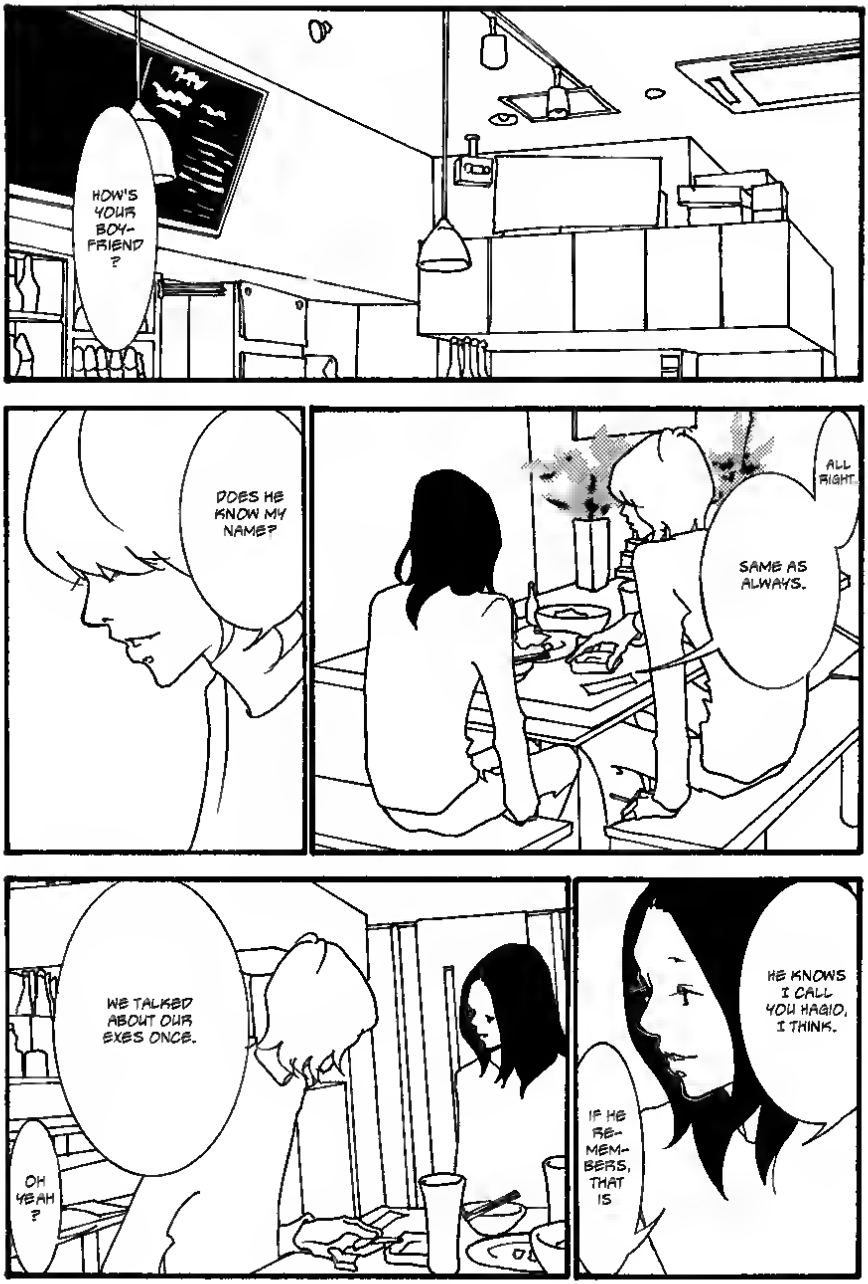
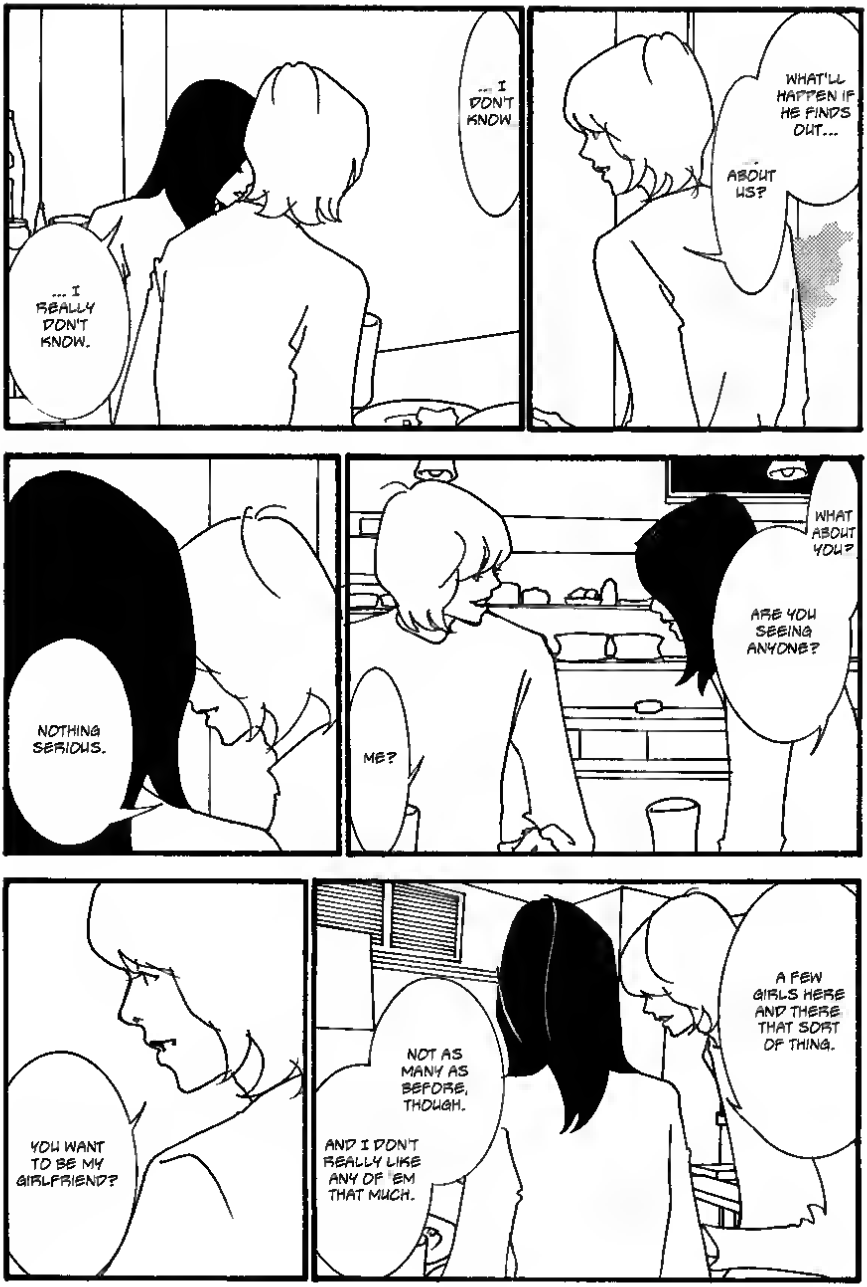
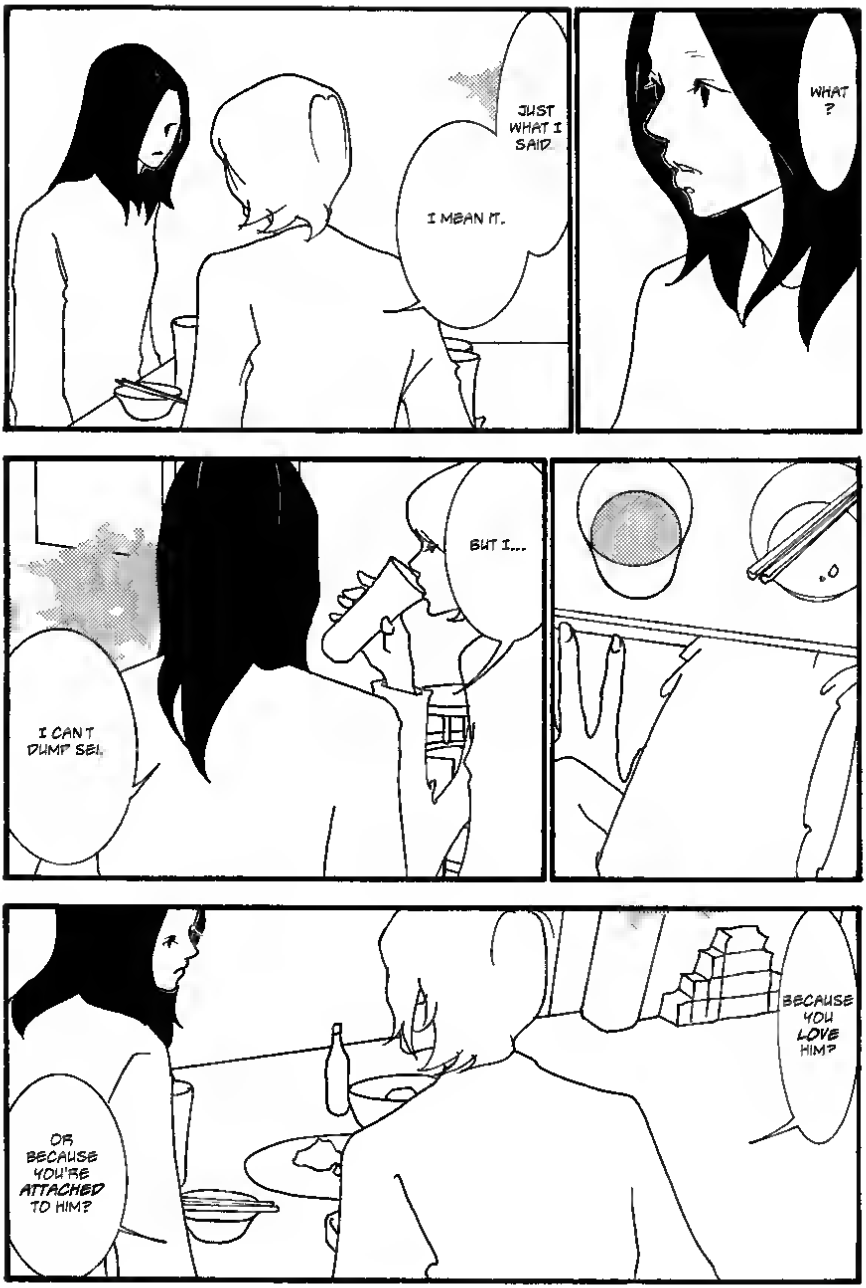
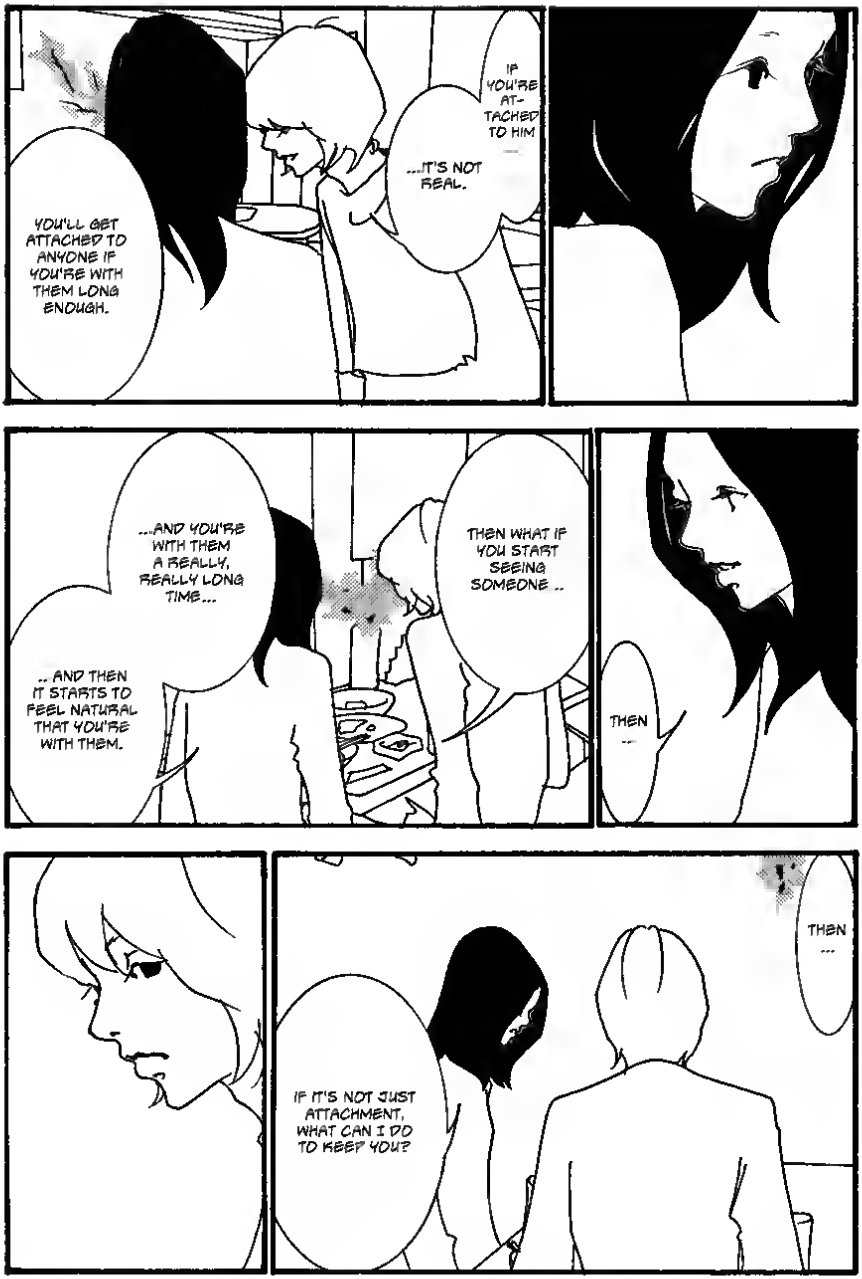
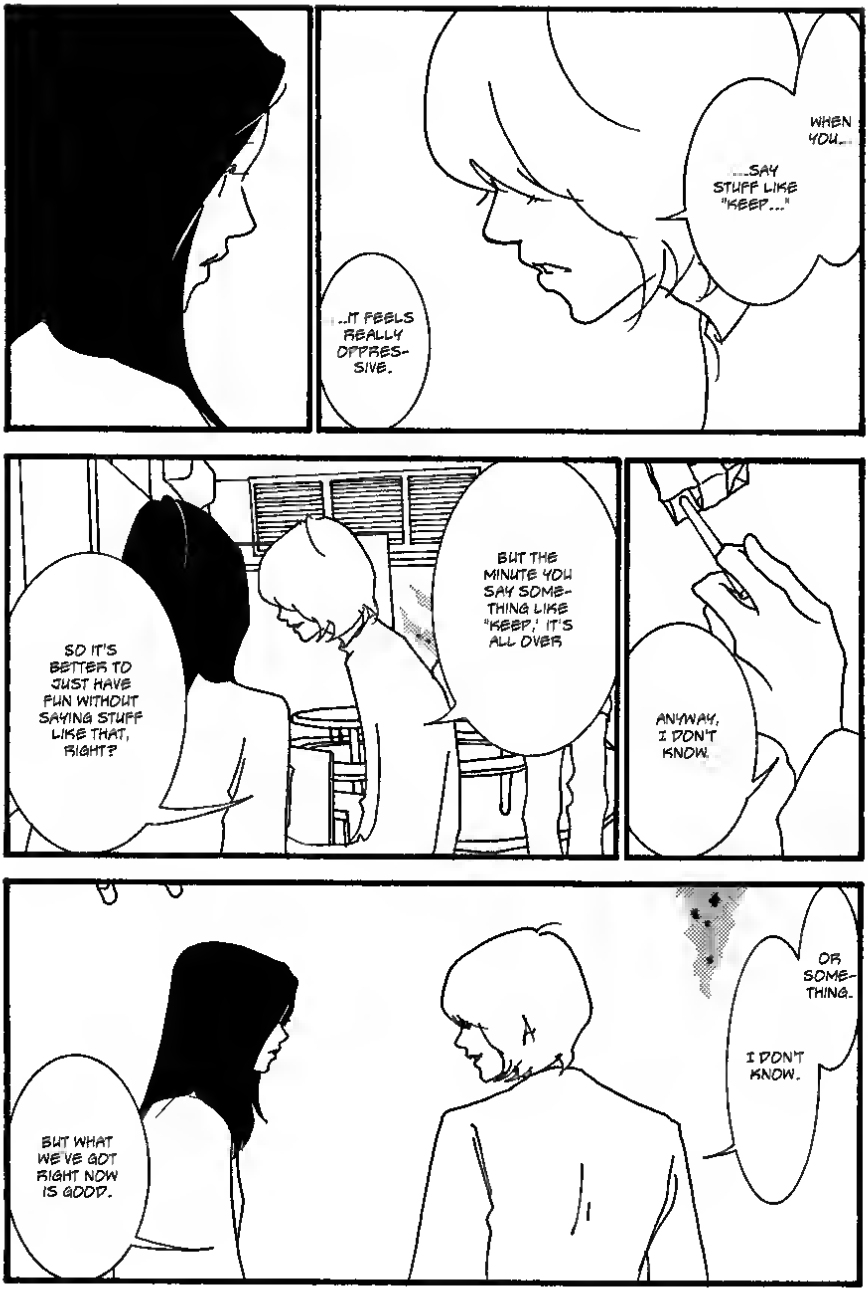
DILLE
Lettered by
NOMAD SOUL

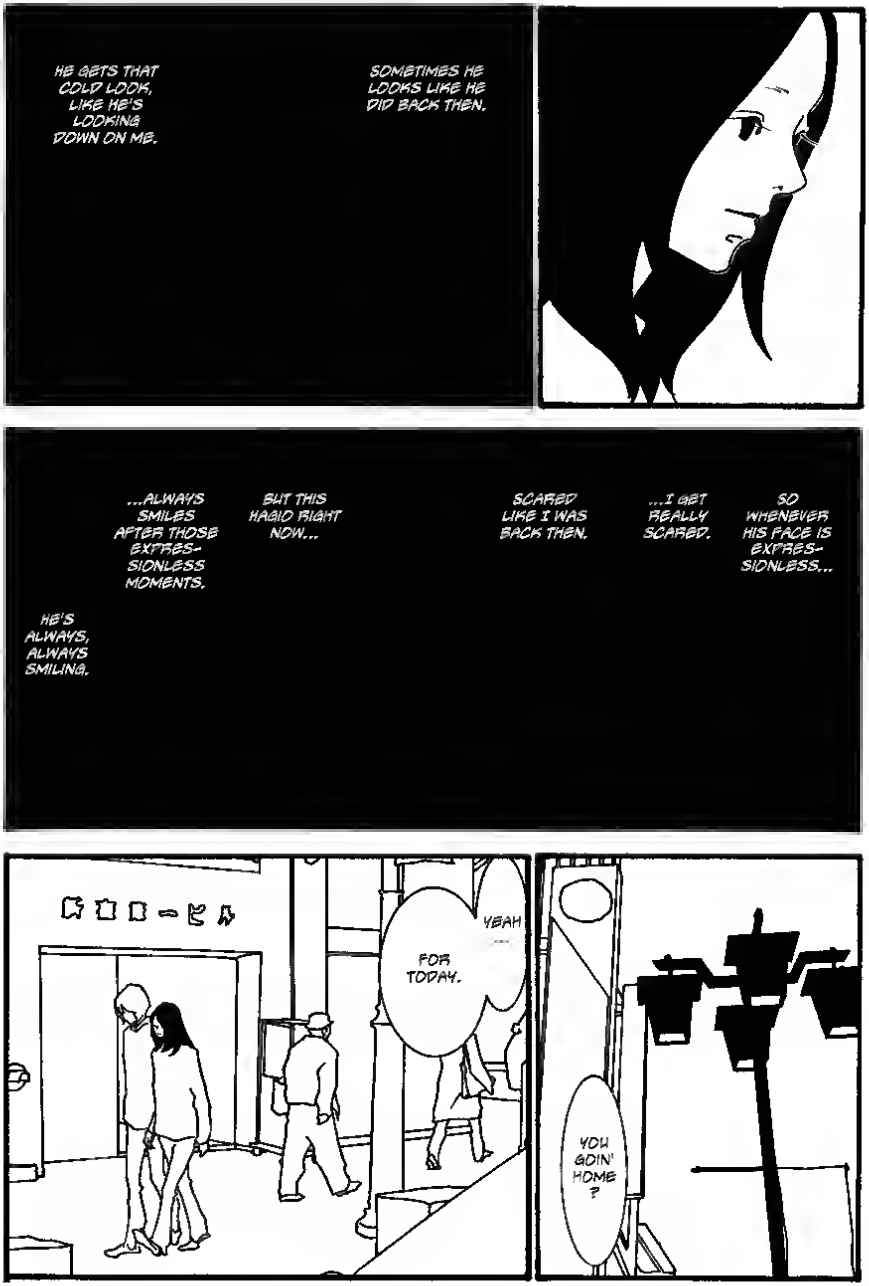

HOW'S YOUR BOY-FRIEND?
DOES HE KNOW MY NAME?
ALL RIGHT.
SAME AS ALWAYS.
WE TALKED ABOUT OUR EXES ONCE.
OH YEAH?
HE KNOWS I CALL YOU HAGIO, I THINK.
IF HE REMEMBERS, THAT IS

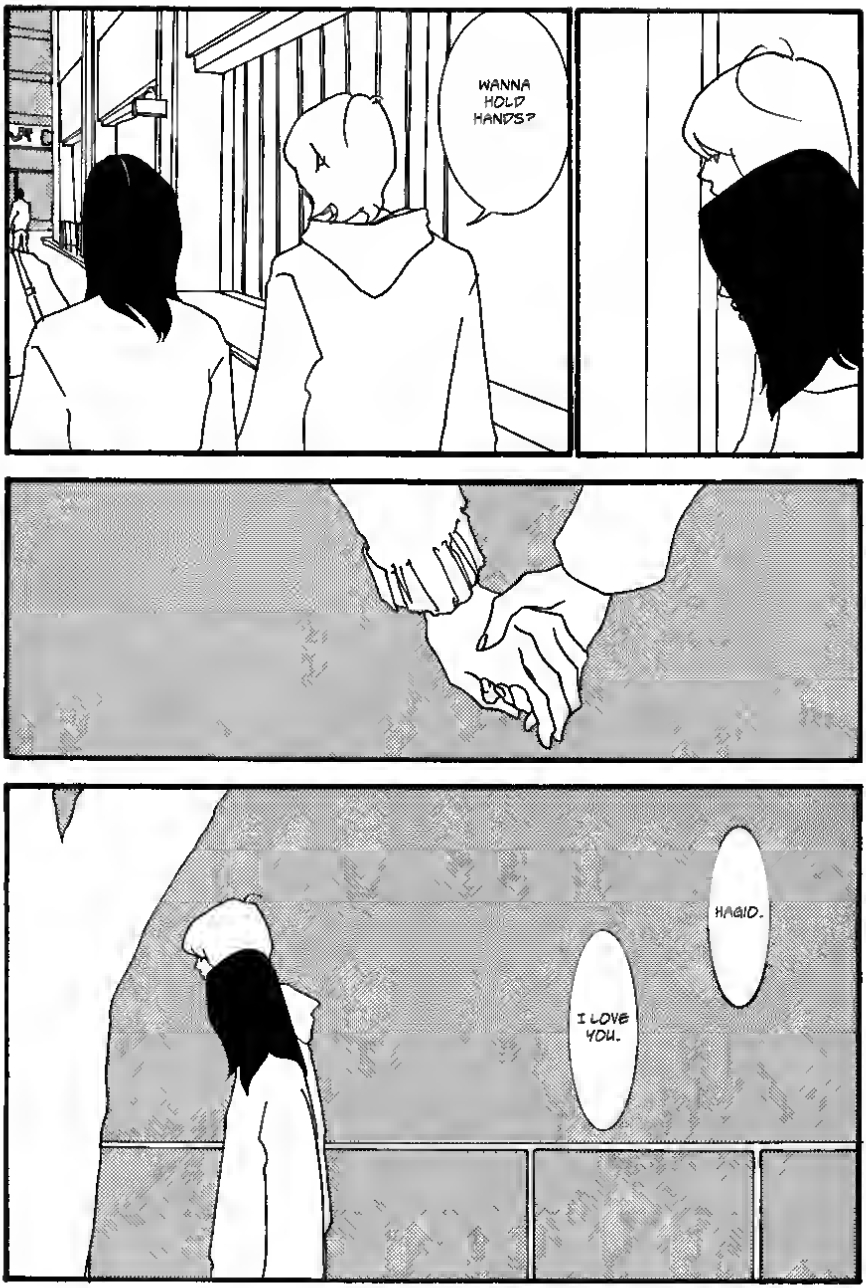

... I DON'T KNOW.
... I REALLY DON'T KNOW.
WHAT'LL HAPPEN IF HE FINDS OUT...
ABOUT US?
NOTHING SERIOUS.
WHAT ABOUT YOU?
ARE YOU SEEING ANYONE?
ME?
YOU WANT TO BE MY GIRLFRIEND?
NOT AS MANY AS BEFORE, THOUGH.
AND I DON'T REALLY LIKE ANY OF 'EM THAT MUCH.
A FEW GIRLS HERE AND THERE. THAT SORT OF THING.

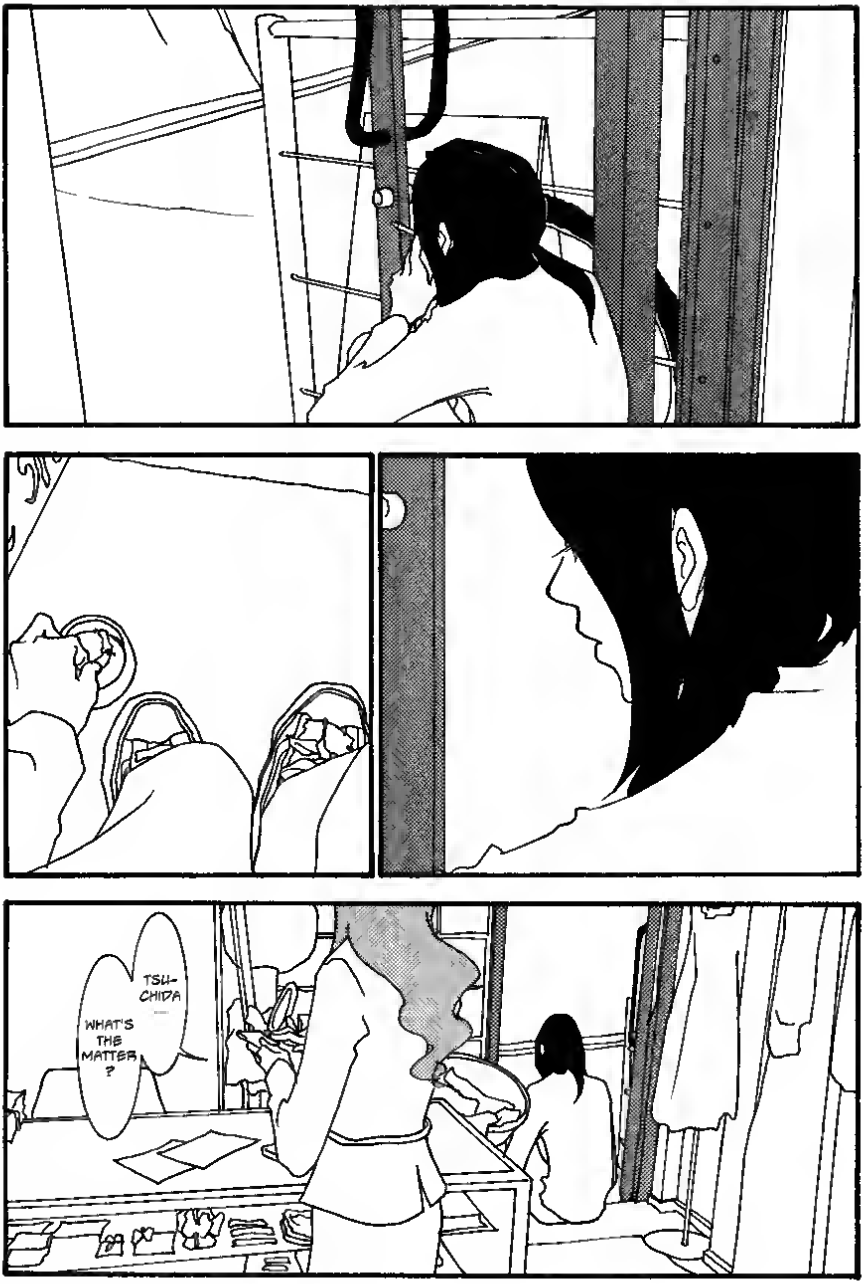

JUST WHAT I SAID.
I MEAN IT.
WHAT?
BUT I...
I CAN'T DUMP SEI.
.o
BECAUSE YOU LOVE HIM?
OR BECAUSE YOU'RE ATTACHED TO HIM?

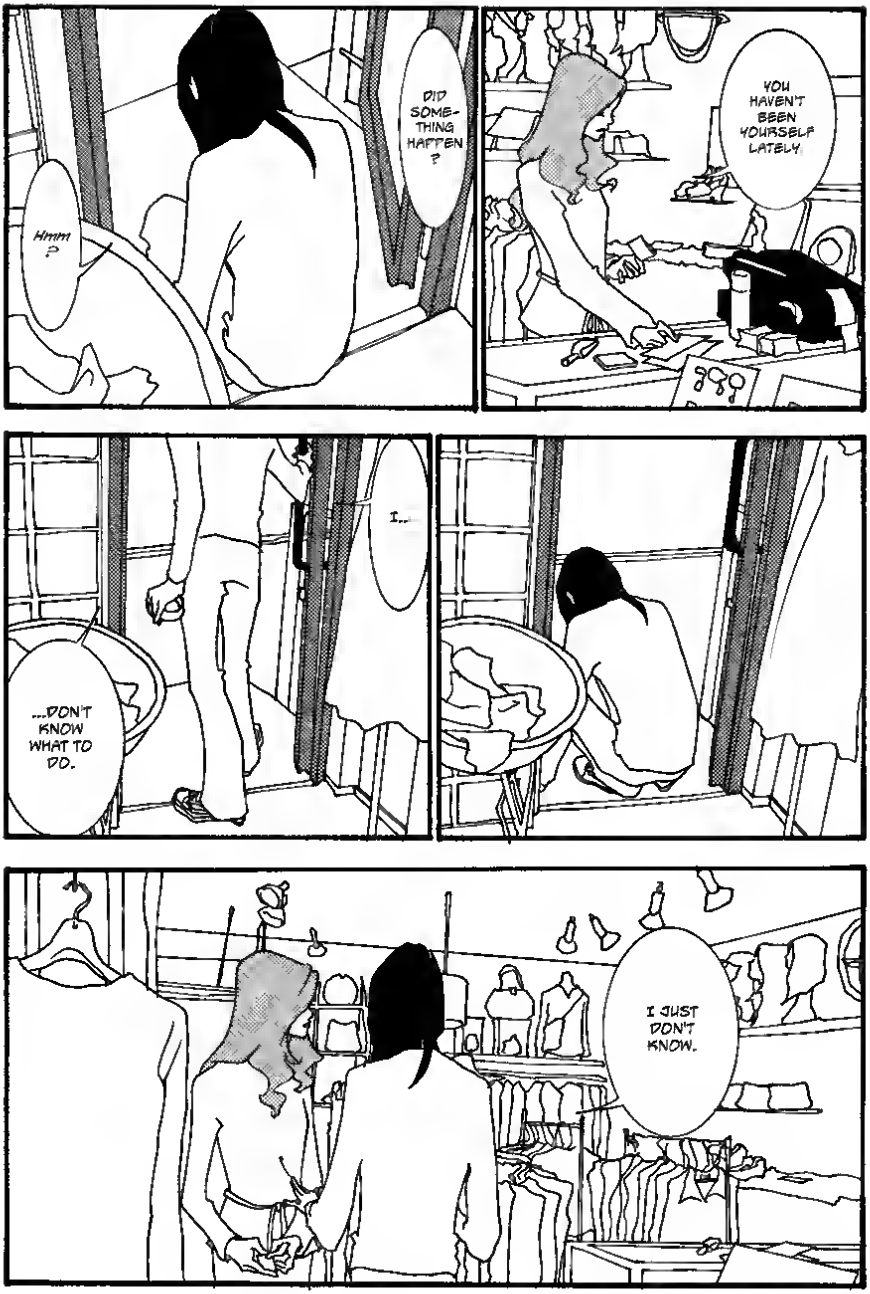

YOU'LL GET ATTACHED TO ANYONE IF YOU'RE WITH THEM LONG ENOUGH.
...IT'S NOT REAL.
IF YOU'RE ATTACHED TO HIM
.. AND THEN IT STARTS TO FEEL NATURAL THAT YOU'RE WITH THEM.
...AND YOU'RE WITH THEM A REALLY, REALLY LONG TIME...
THEN WHAT IF YOU START SEEING SOMEONE ..
THEN ...
IF IT'S NOT JUST ATTACHMENT, WHAT CAN I DO TO KEEP YOU?
THEN ...


...IT FEELS REALLY OPPRES-SIVE.
WHEN YOU...
...SAY STUFF LIKE "KEEP..."
SO IT'S BETTER TO JUST HAVE FUN WITHOUT SAYING STUFF LIKE THAT, RIGHT?
BUT THE MINUTE YOU SAY SOME-THING LIKE "KEEP," IT'S ALL OVER
ANYWAY, I DON'T KNOW.
BUT WHAT WE'VE GOT RIGHT NOW IS GOOD.
I DON'T KNOW.
OR SOME-THING.

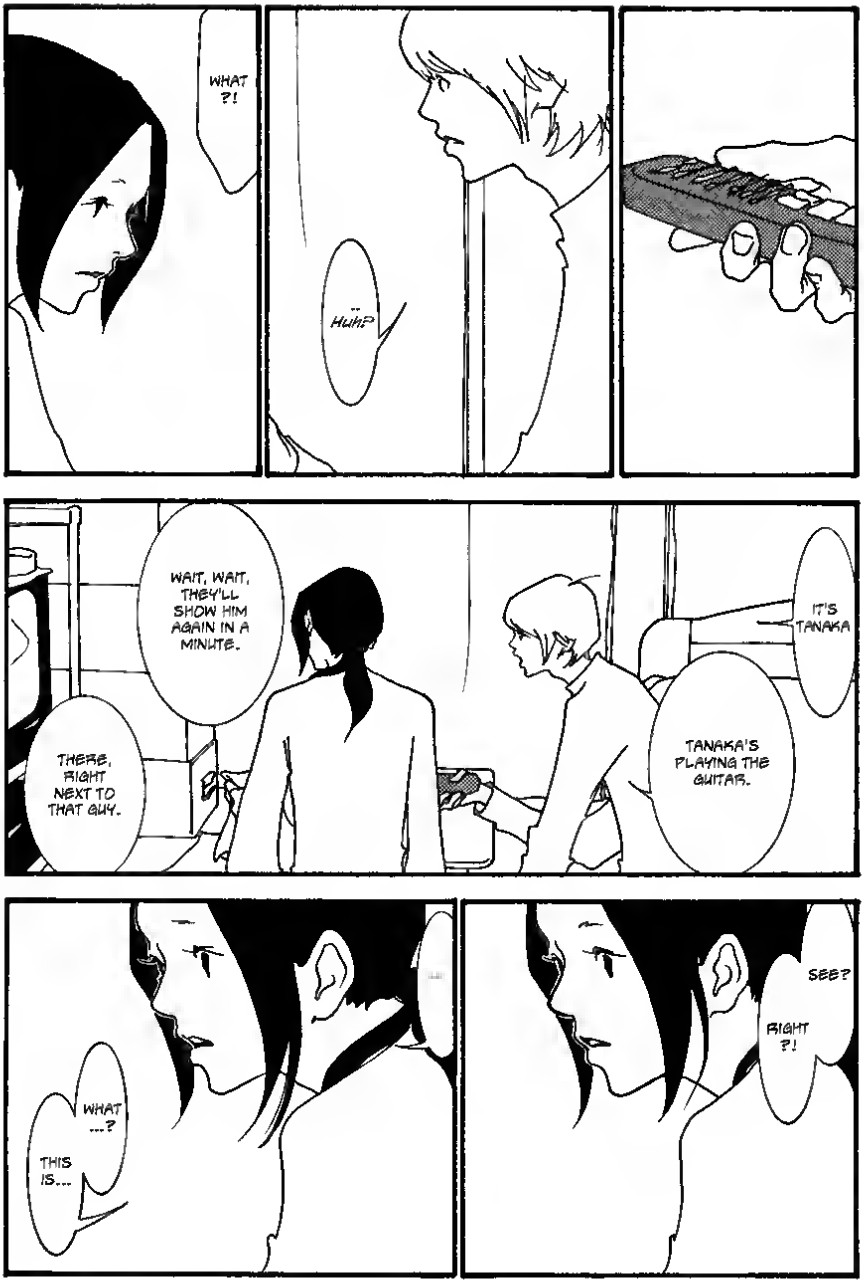

HE GETS THAT COLD LOOK, LIKE HE'S LOOKING DOWN ON ME.
SOMETIMES HE LOOKS LIKE HE DID BACK THEN.
HE'S ALWAYS, ALWAYS SMILING.
...ALWAYS SMILES AFTER THOSE EXPRESSIONLESS MOMENTS.
BUT THIS HABIT RIGHT NOW...
SCARED LIKE I WAS BACK THEN.
...I GET REALLY SCARED.
SO WHENEVER HIS FACE IS EXPRESSIONLESS...
ロビー
YEAH... FOR TODAY.
YOU GOIN' HOME?

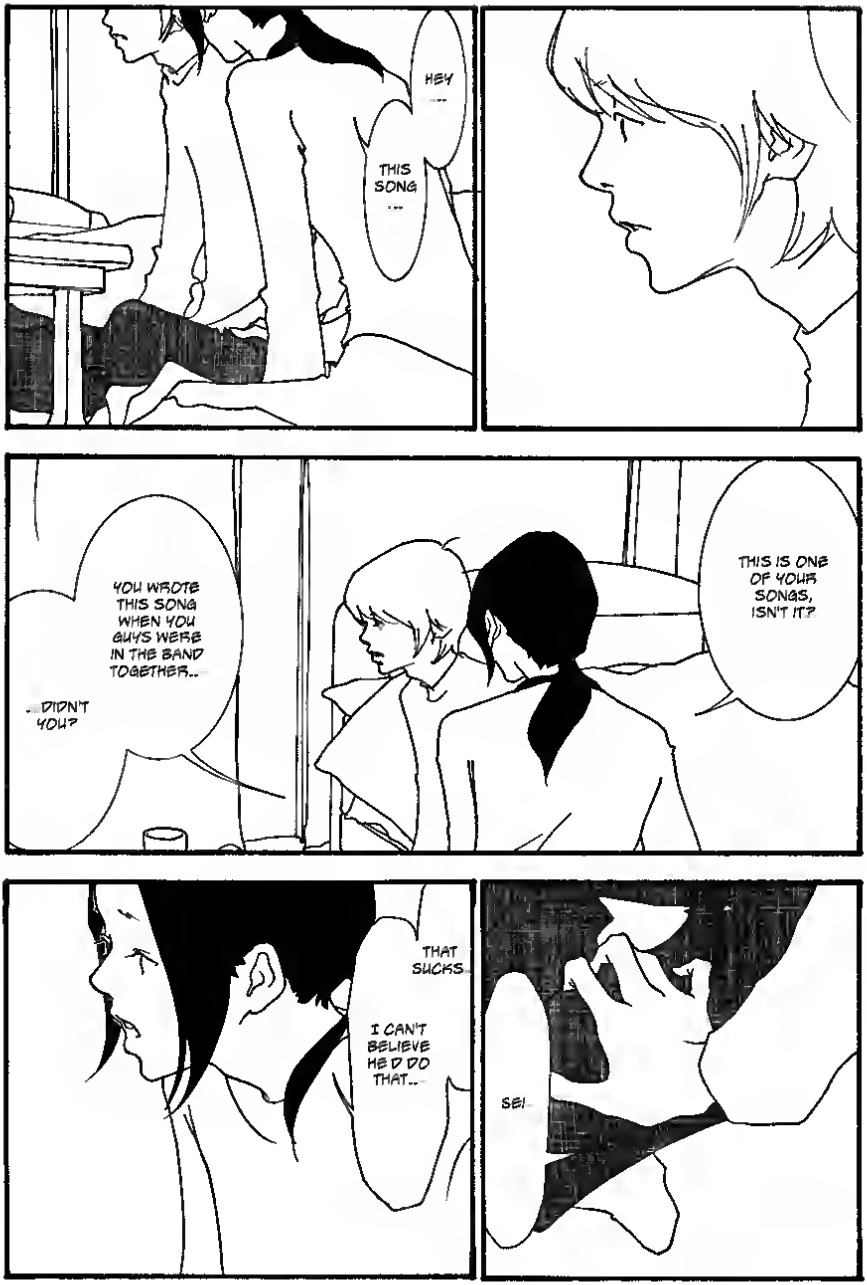

WANNA HOLD HANDS?
HAGID.
I LOVE YOU.

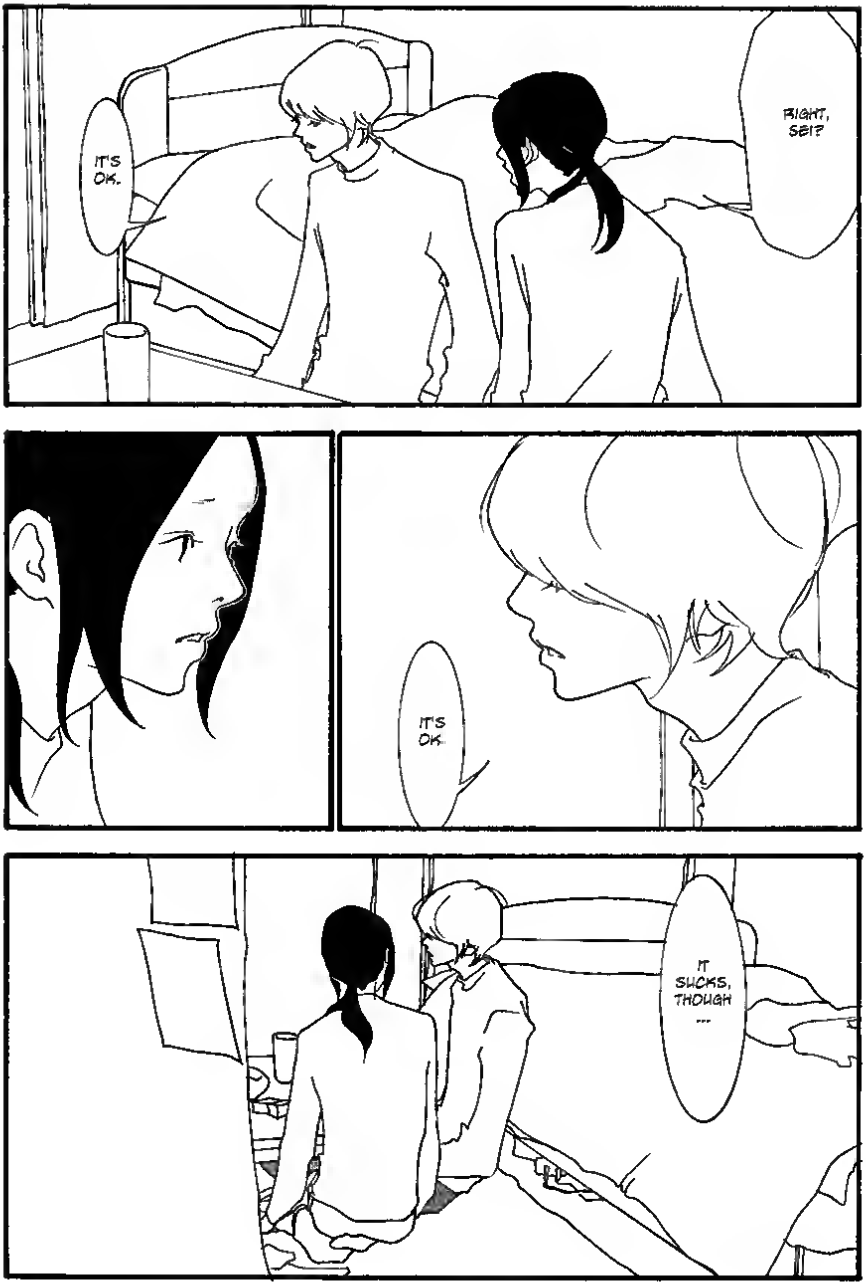

TSU-
CHIDA
WHAT'S
THE
MATTER
?


Hmm ?
DID SOME-THING HAPPEN ?
YOU HAVEN'T BEEN YOURSELF LATELY.
I...
...DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
I JUST DON'T KNOW.

Ahh...
I'M SICK OF MY JOB.
MAYBE I SHOULD LOOK FOR SOMETHING ELSE...
... LIKE THAT'D HAP-PEN.


WHAT ?!
... HUH?
WAIT, WAIT. THEY'LL SHOW HIM AGAIN IN A MINUTE.
IT'S TANAKA
THERE, RIGHT NEXT TO THAT GUY.
TANAKA'S PLAYING THE GUITAR.
WHAT ...?
THIS IS...
SEE?
RIGHT ?!

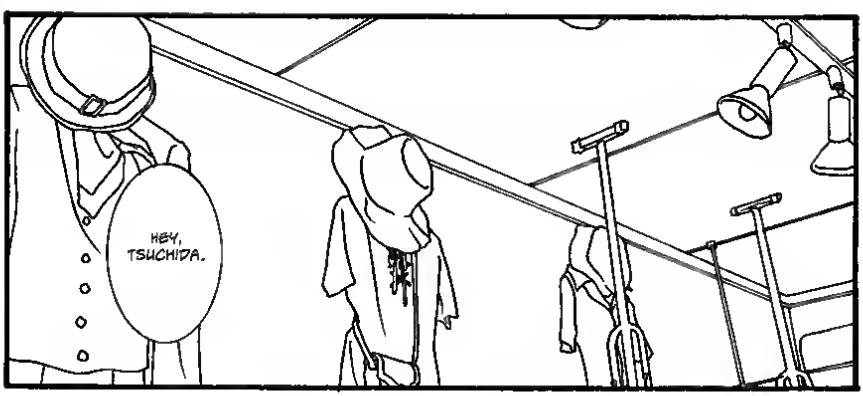

HEY ...
THIS SONG ...
THIS IS ONE OF YOUR SONGS, ISN'T IT?
YOU WROTE THIS SONG WHEN YOU GUYS WERE IN THE BAND TOGETHER...
...DIDN'T YOU?
THAT SUCKS...
I CAN'T BELIEVE HE'D DO THAT...
SEI...


IT'S OK.
RIGHT, SEI?
IT'S OK.
IT SUCKS, THOUGH ...

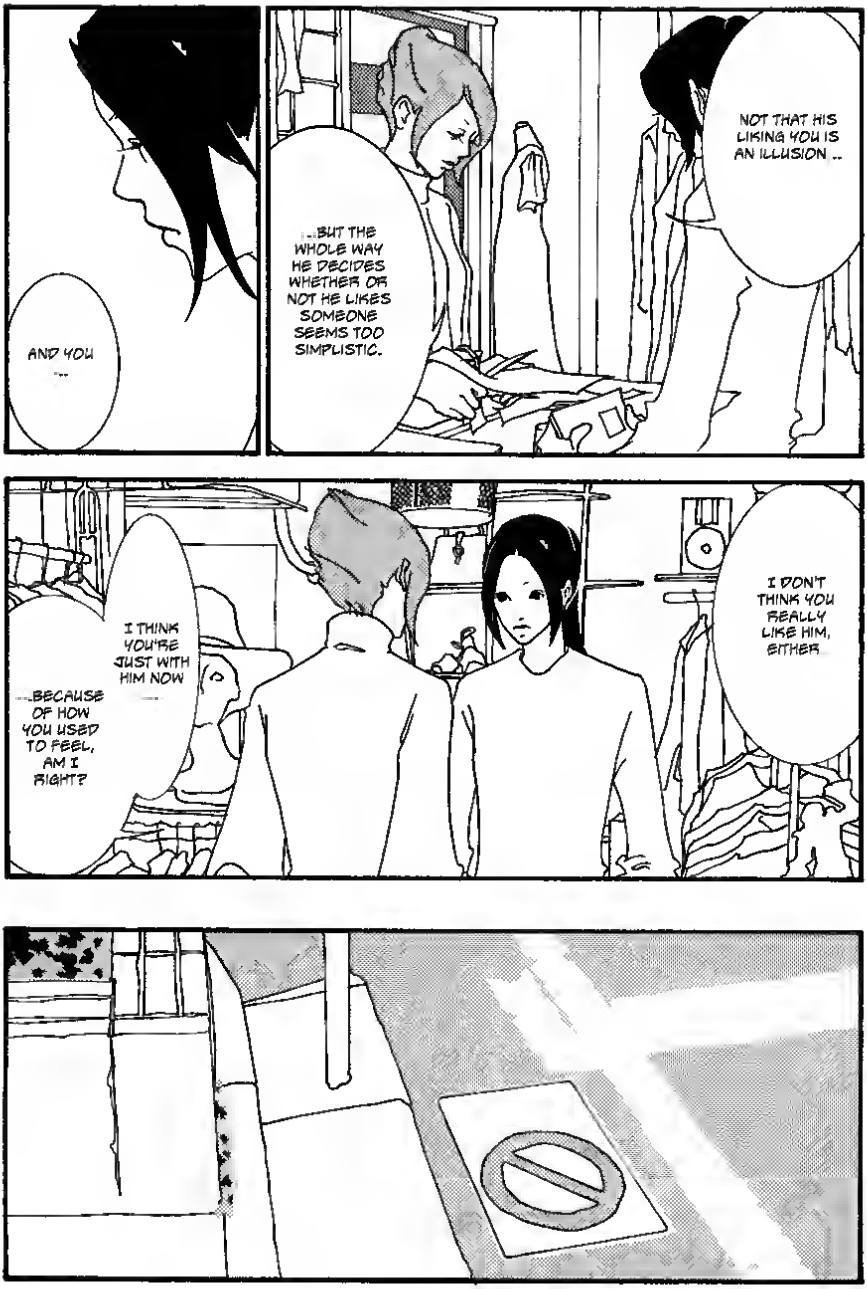
...IS JUST AS MUCH OF A BETRAYAL.
MAYBE WHAT I'M DOING WITH HAGIO...
I WANT TO TREAT HIM RIGHT, BUT I CAN'T EVEN LOOK AT HIM ANYMORE.
I FEEL SO GUILTY IT HURTS.
HE REALLY MEANS A LOT TO ME.
I WANT TO TREAT SEI RIGHT.
BEING WITH HIM HURTS...
SO I WANT TO RUN AWAY.

I WISH SEI WOULD JUST DUMP ME.

IF HE DUMPED ME, I COULD BE WITH HAGID.



MIND IF I SAY IT?
AFTER YOU TOLD ME ABOUT HIM, I WAS THINKING...
ABOUT THIS HAGID GUY
AND IF YOU'RE JUST OUT HAVING A BEER...
...ANYONE'S GONNA HAVE A GOOD TIME.
THE THING IS...
YOU'RE ALWAYS GOING TO HAVE A LOT TO TALK ABOUT AT FIRST.
DON'T YOU THINK MAYBE IT'S JUST AN ILLUSION?
...BUT IS THAT REALLY WHAT IT MEANS TO LIKE SOMEONE?
YOU SAID HE SAID HE LIKES YOU 'CAUSE YOU'RE FUN...


AND YOU ...
...BUT THE WHOLE WAY HE DECIDES WHETHER OR NOT HE LIKES SOMEONE SEEMS TOO SIMPLISTIC.
NOT THAT HIS LIKING YOU IS AN ILLUSION ...
...BECAUSE OF HOW YOU USED TO FEEL, AM I RIGHT?
I THINK YOU'RE JUST WITH HIM NOW ...
I DON'T THINK YOU REALLY LIKE HIM, EITHER.

HE SOUNDED HAPPY.

HAGID PICKED UP THE PHONE IN THE MIDDLE OF MY MESSAGE.

Chapter 8

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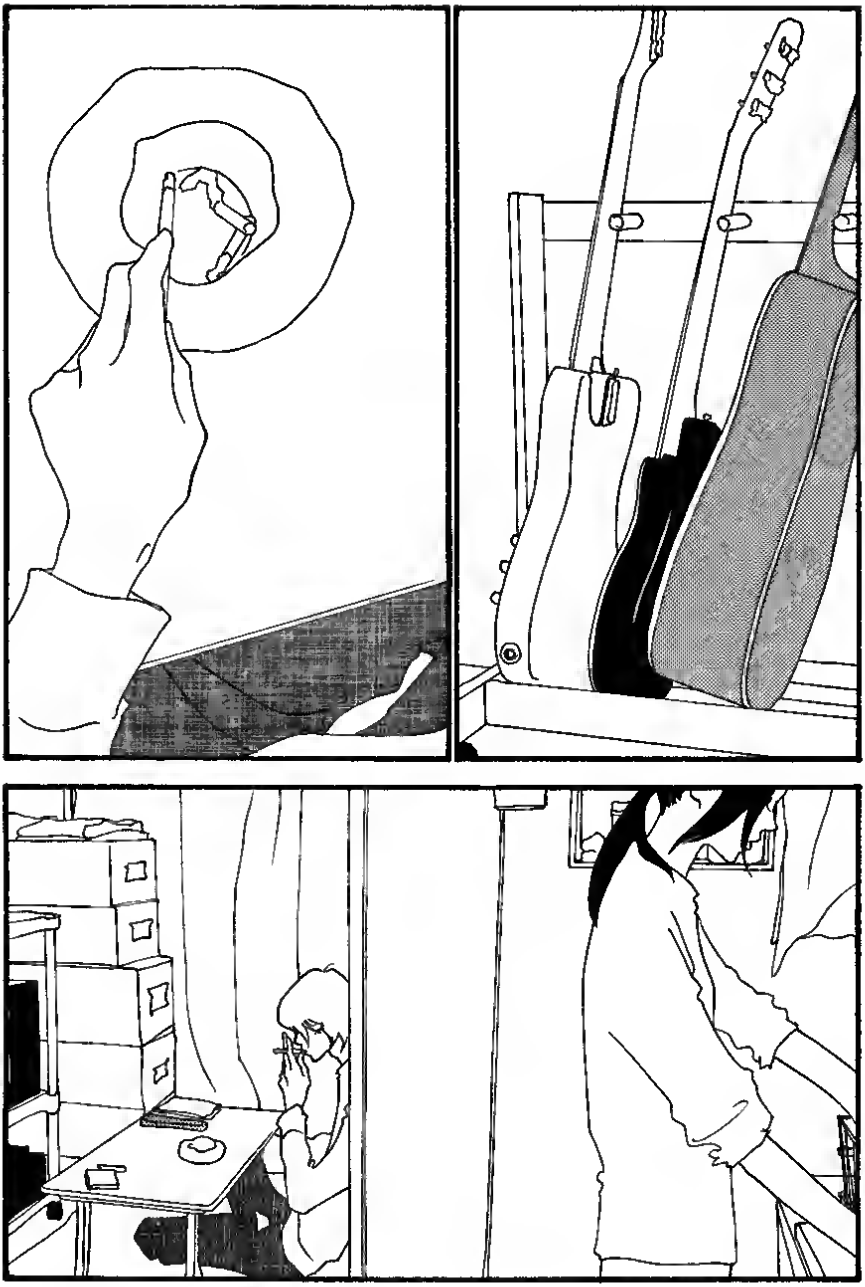
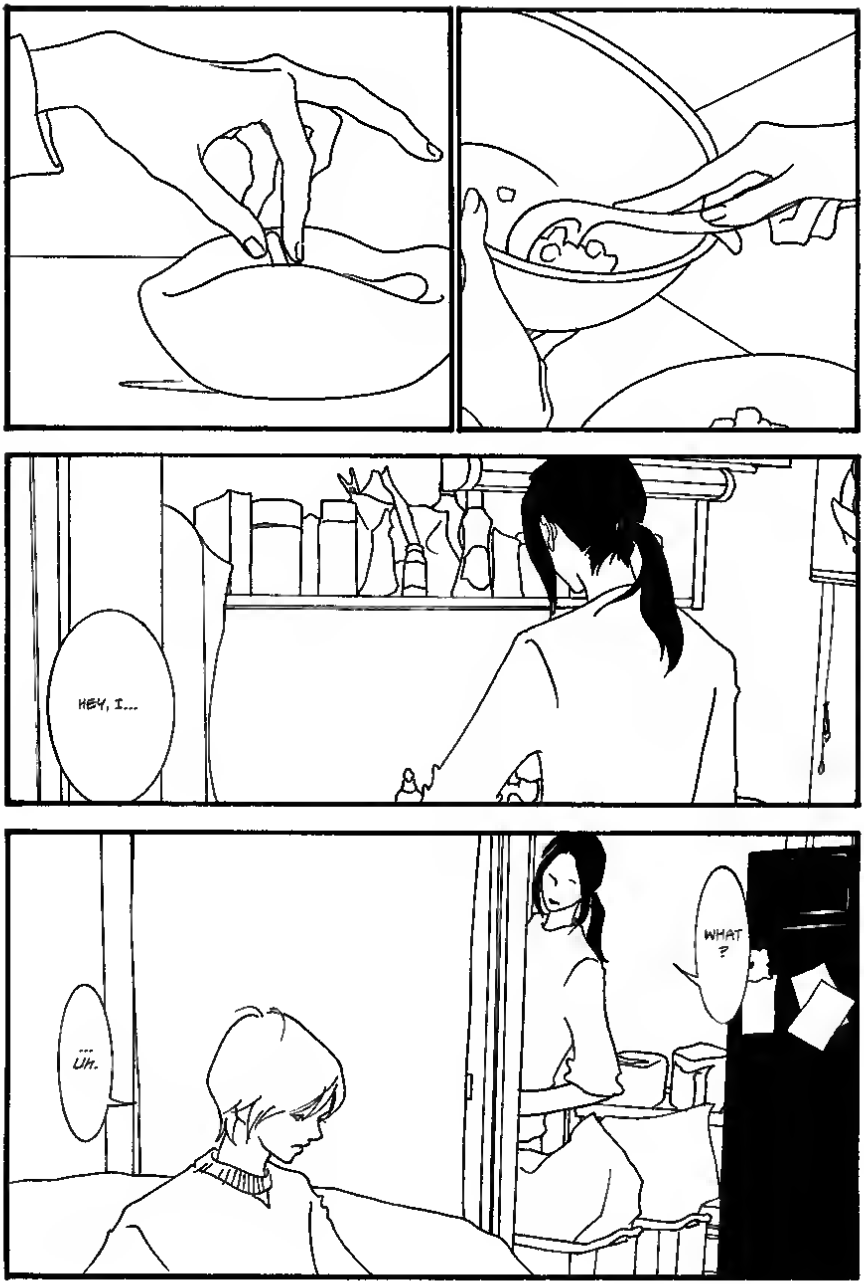
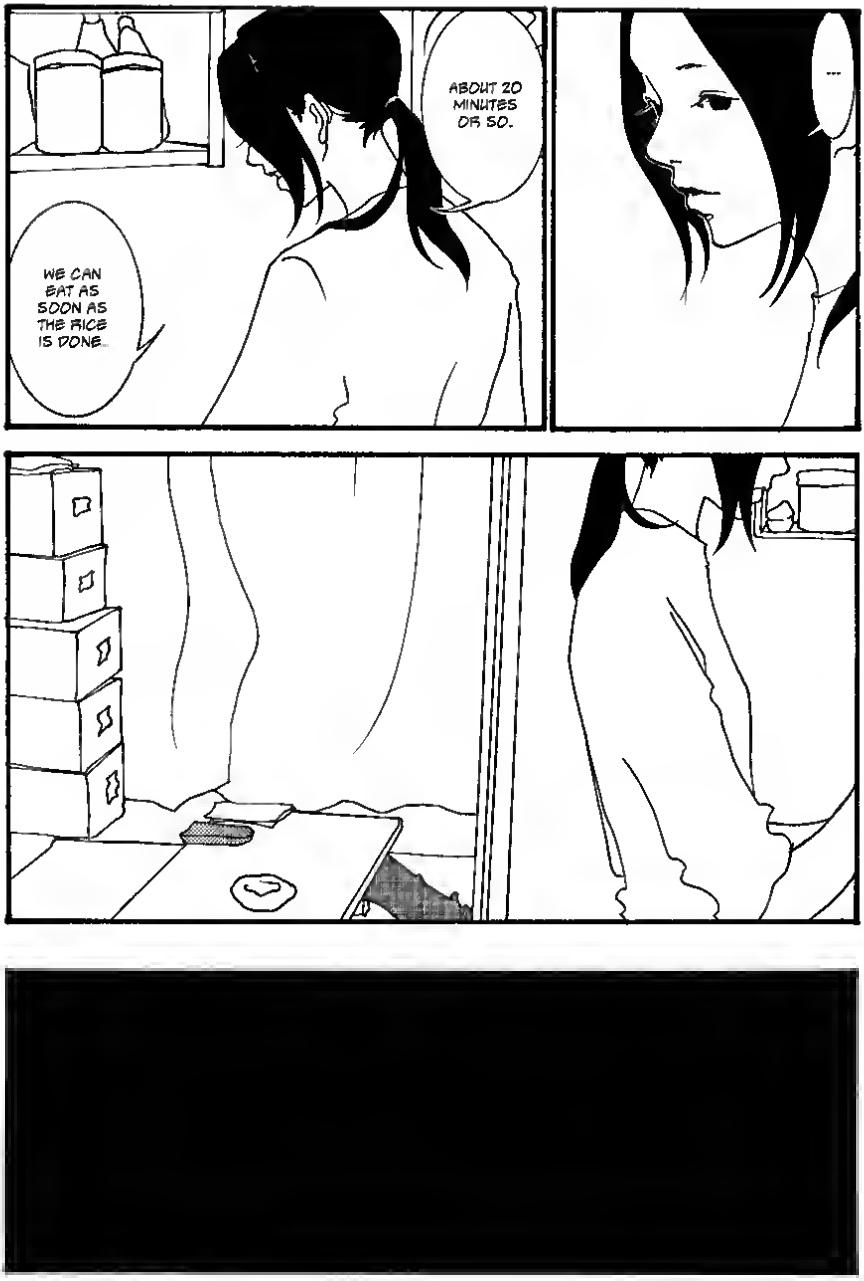
MEGCHAN
Cleaned by
DILLE
Lettered by
NOMAD SOUL

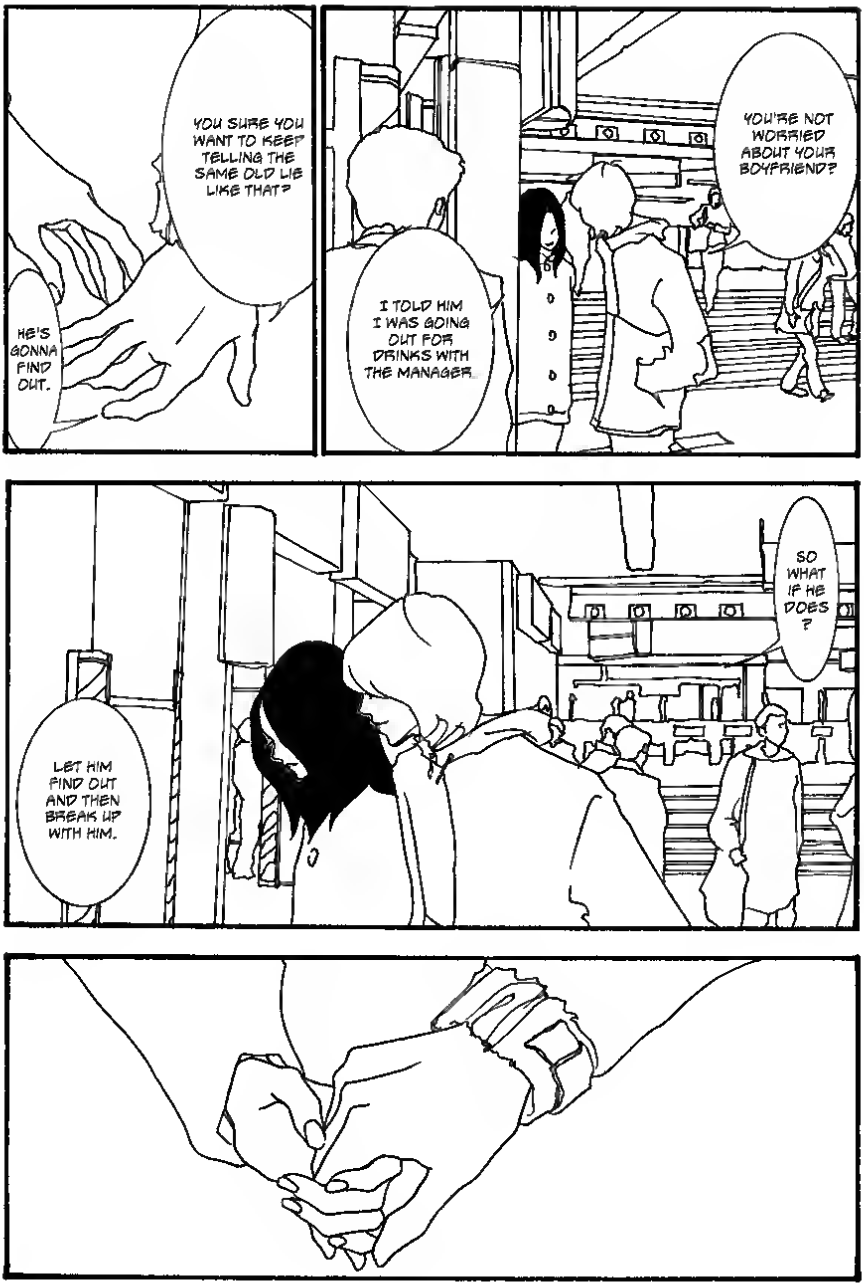


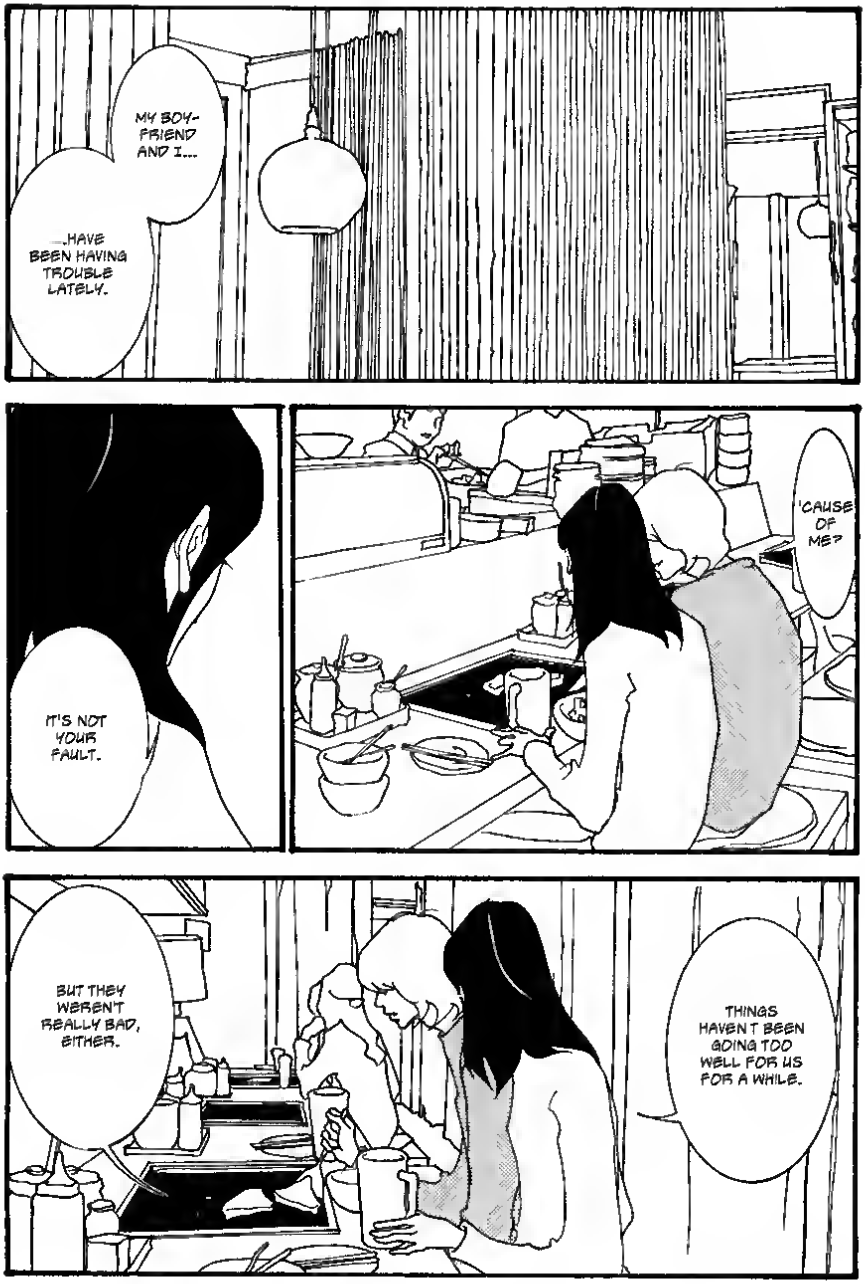

HEY, I...
...
UH.
WHAT
?

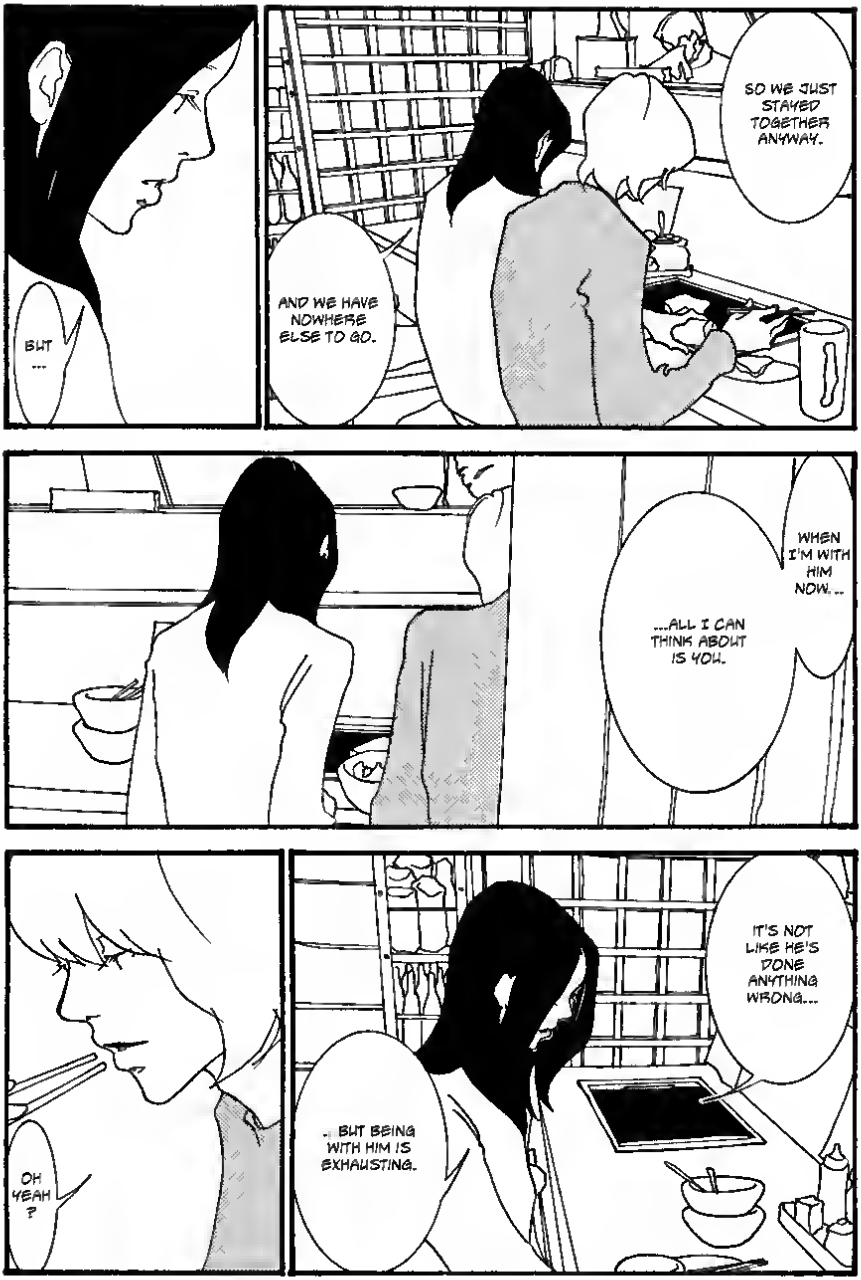
...
...
UH.
NEVER MIND, IT'S NOTHING.
HUH?
WHAT?
I'M STARVING.
HOW MUCH LONGER?

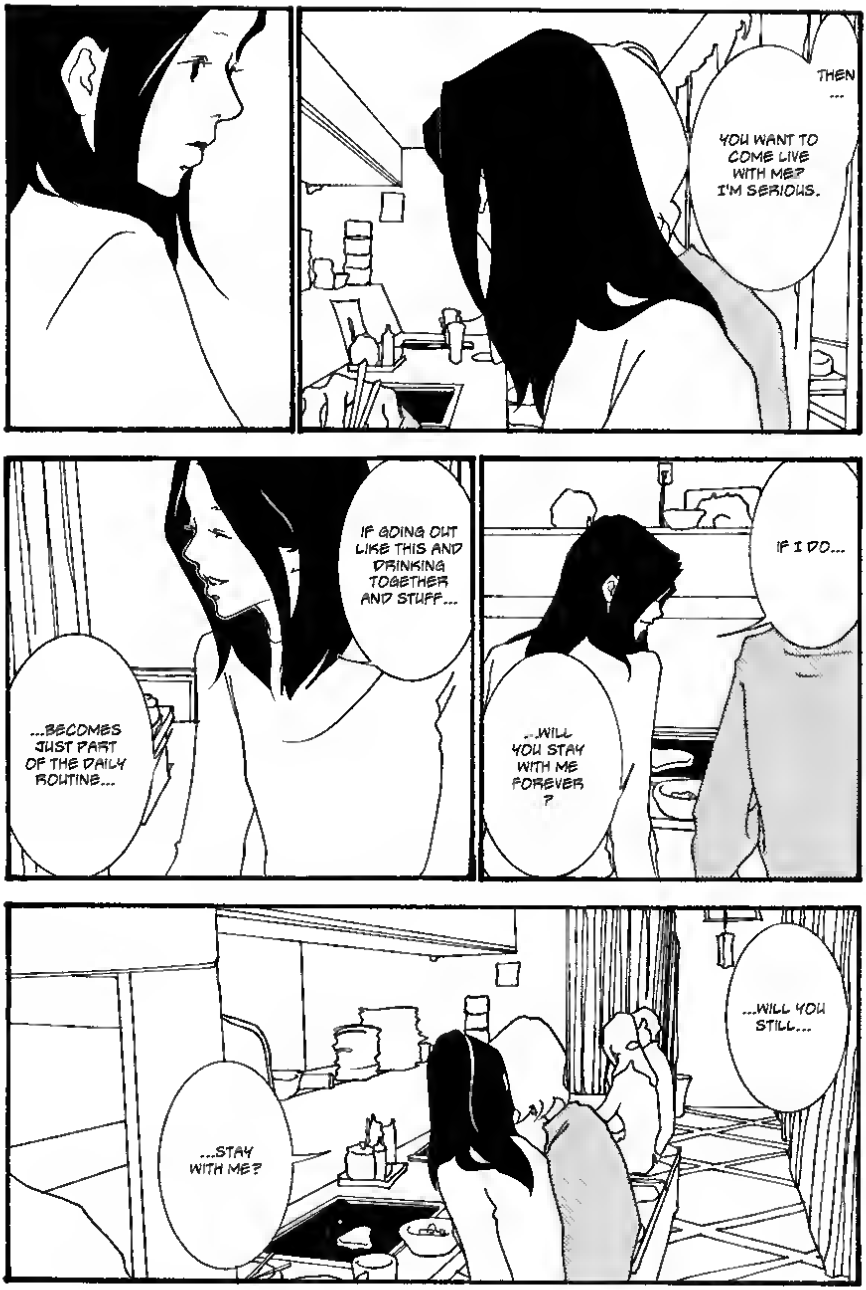

ABOUT 20 MINUTES OR SO.
WE CAN EAT AS SOON AS THE RICE IS DONE.
...

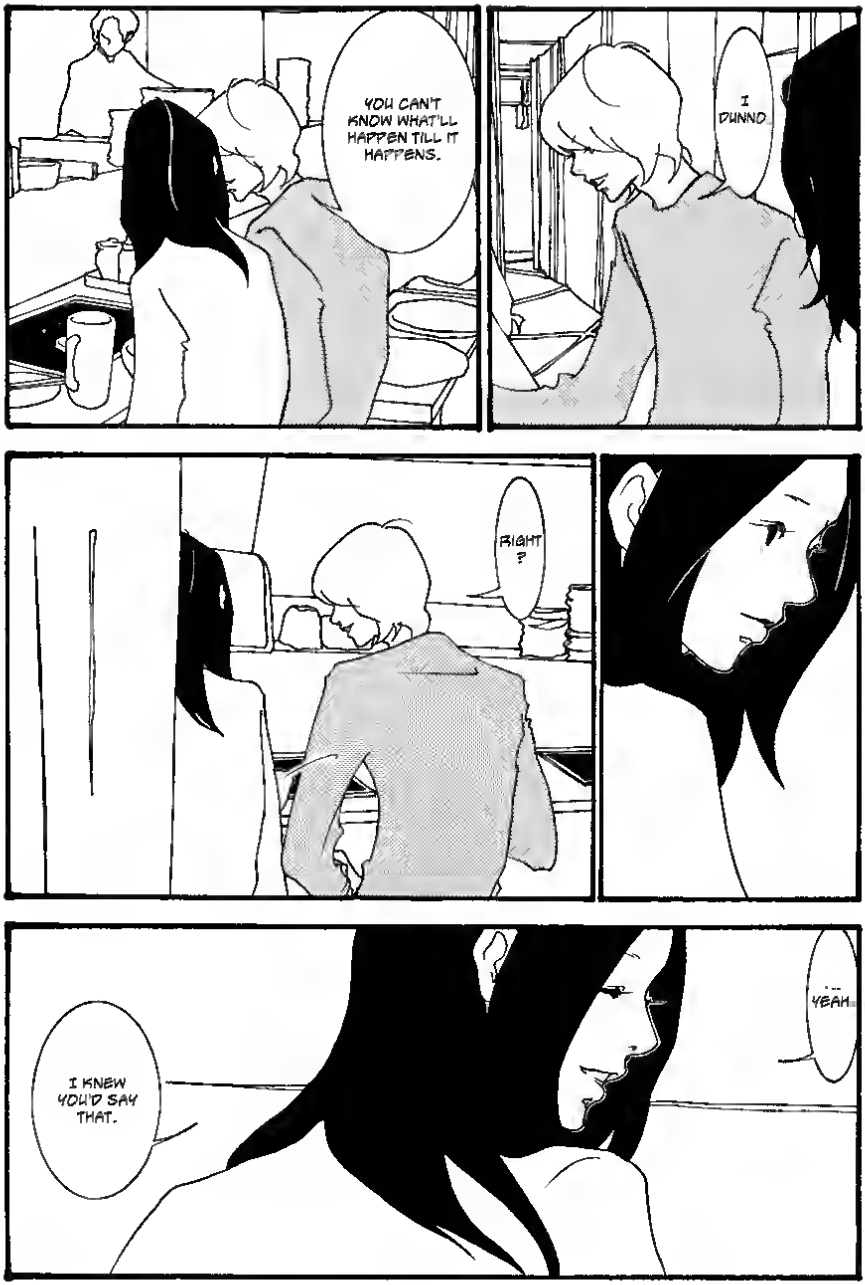
YOU'RE LATE
SORRY, A CUSTOMER CAME IN JUST AS WE WERE CLOSING UP SHOP.

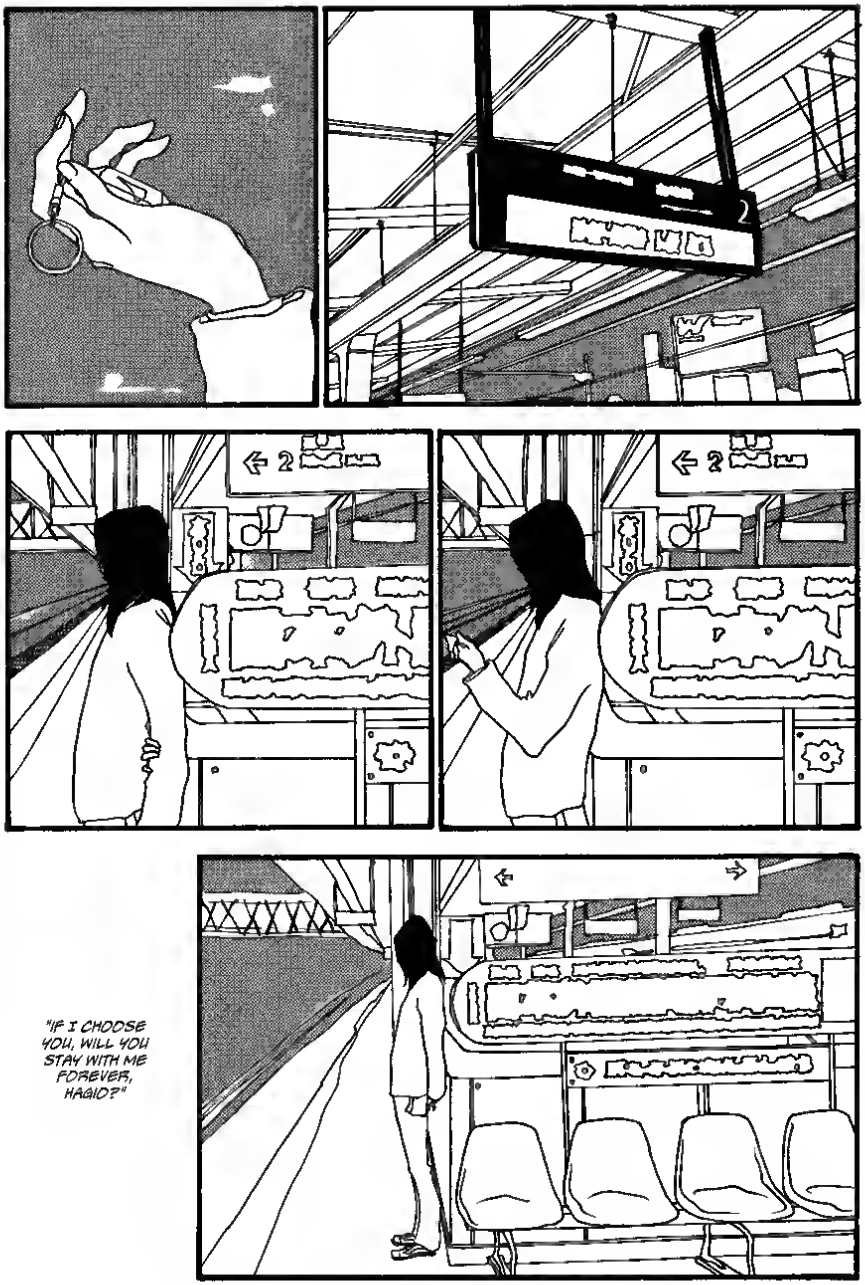

YOU SURE YOU WANT TO KEEP TELLING THE SAME OLD LIE LIKE THAT?
HE'S GONNA FIND OUT.
I TOLD HIM I WAS GOING OUT FOR DRINKS WITH THE MANAGER.
YOU'RE NOT WORRIED ABOUT YOUR BOYFRIEND?
LET HIM FIND OUT AND THEN BREAK UP WITH HIM.
SO WHAT IF HE DOES?


MY BOY-FRIEND AND I....
...HAVE BEEN HAVING TROUBLE LATELY.
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.
'CAUSE OF ME?
BUT THEY WEREN'T REALLY BAD, EITHER.
THINGS HAVEN'T BEEN GOING TOO WELL FOR US FOR A WHILE.


BUT ...
AND WE HAVE NOWHERE ELSE TO GO.
SO WE JUST STAYED TOGETHER ANYWAY.
WHEN I'M WITH HIM NOW...
...ALL I CAN THINK ABOUT IS YOU.
OH YEAH ?
...BUT BEING WITH HIM IS EXHAUSTING.
IT'S NOT LIKE HE'S DONE ANYTHING WRONG...


THEN ...
YOU WANT TO COME LIVE WITH ME? I'M SERIOUS.
IF GOING OUT LIKE THIS AND DRINKING TOGETHER AND STUFF...
...BECOMES JUST PART OF THE DAILY ROUTINE...
IF I DO...
...WILL YOU STAY WITH ME FOREVER ?
...WILL YOU STILL...
...STAY WITH ME?

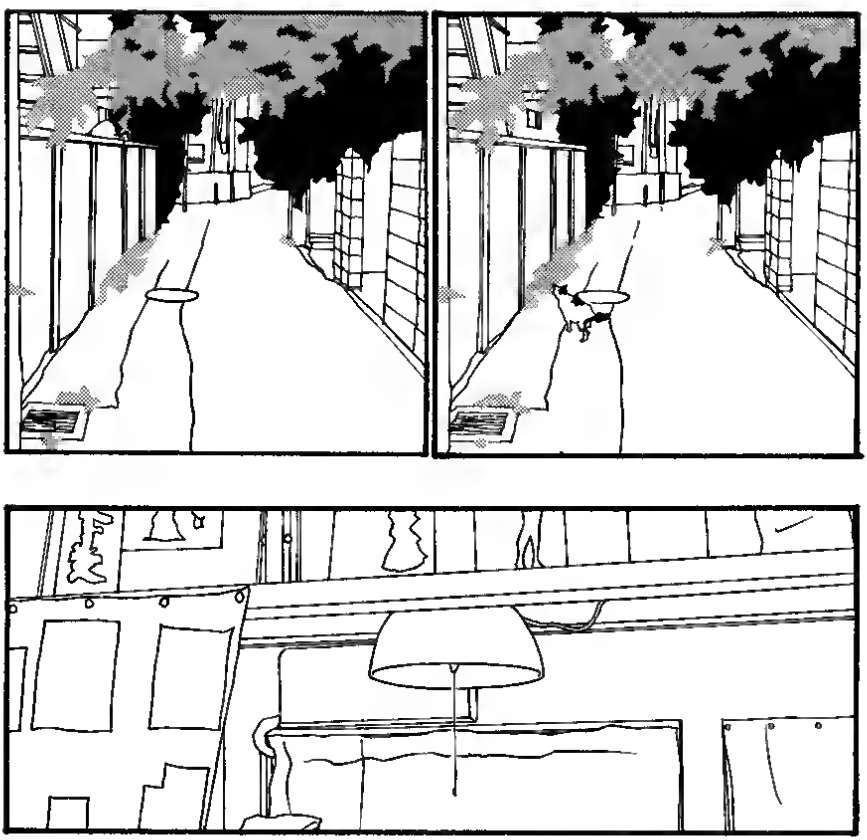

YOU CAN'T KNOW WHAT'LL HAPPEN TILL IT HAPPENS.
I DUNNO.
RIGHT?
...YEAH.
I KNEW YOU'D SAY THAT.

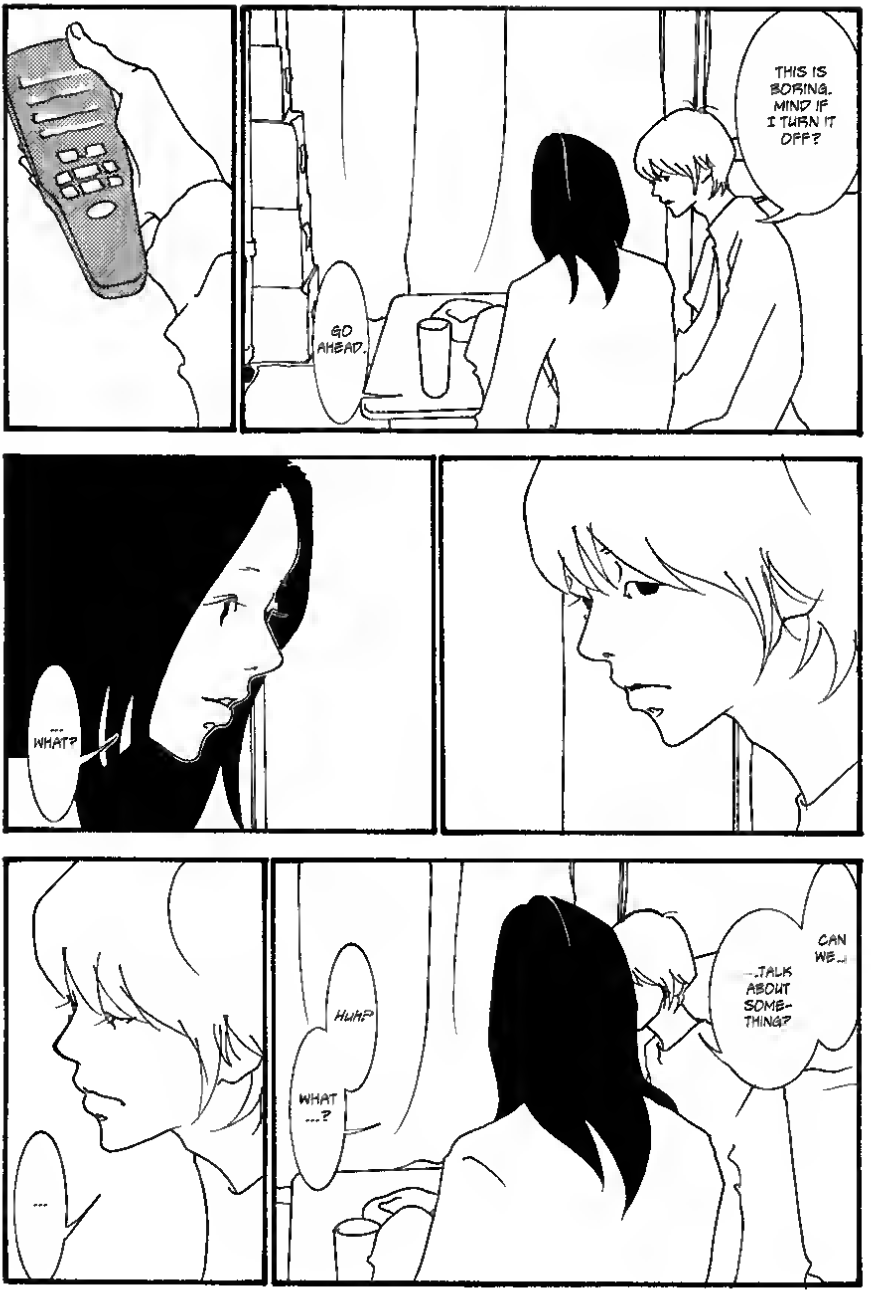

"IF I CHOOSE YOU, WILL YOU STAY WITH ME FOREVER, HAGIO?"

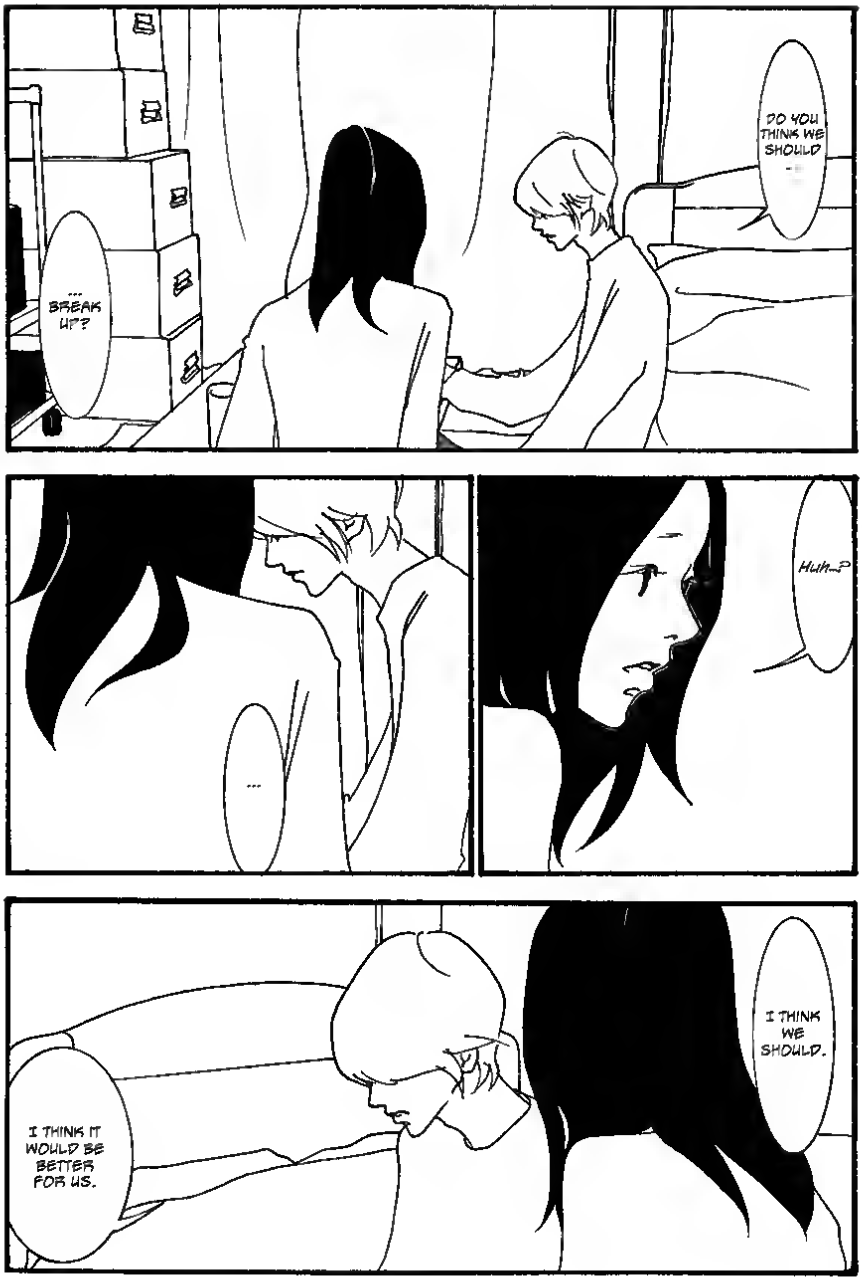
"HEY, HAGID, PLEASE STAY WITH ME FOREVER AND EVER."

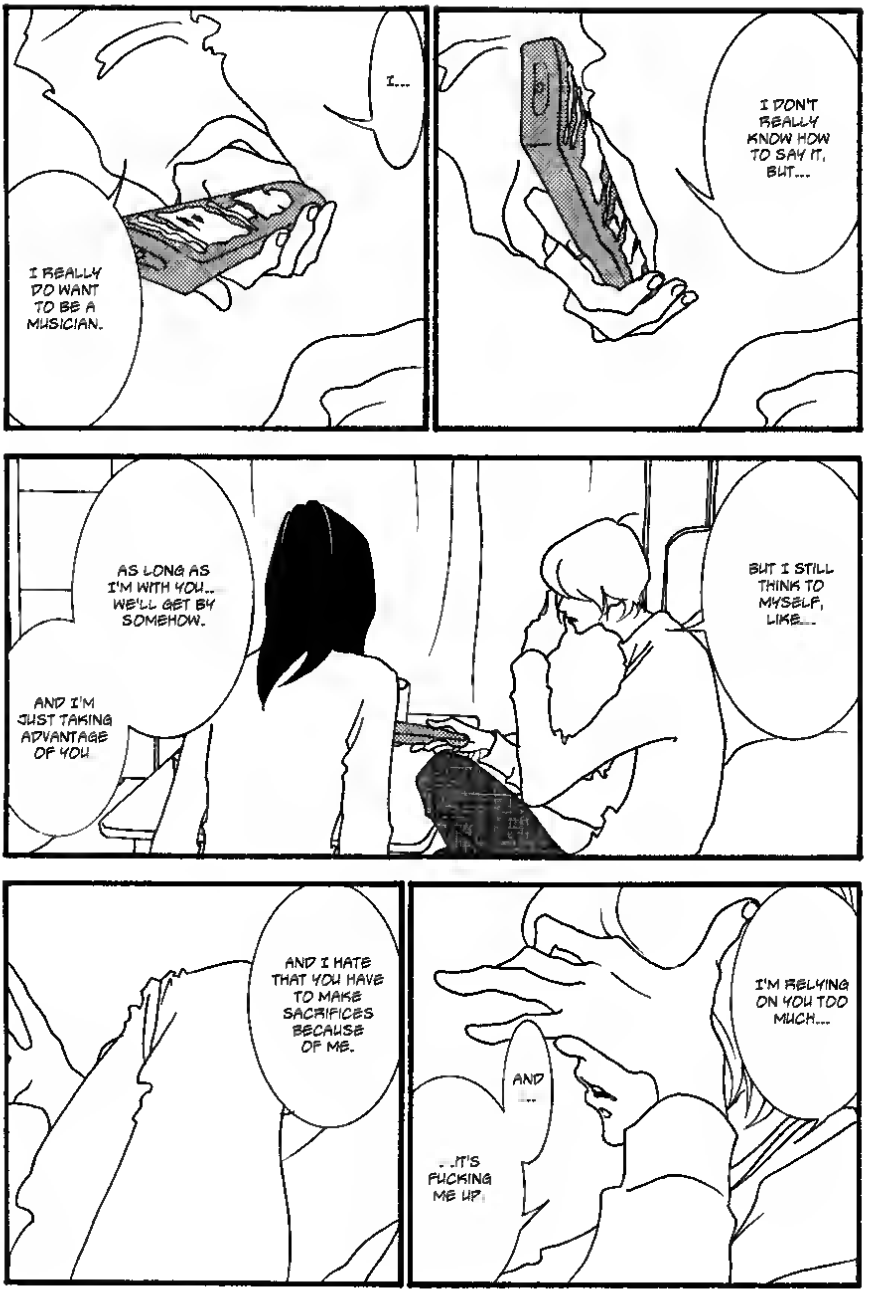
"WILL YOU STAY WITH ME FOREVER?"

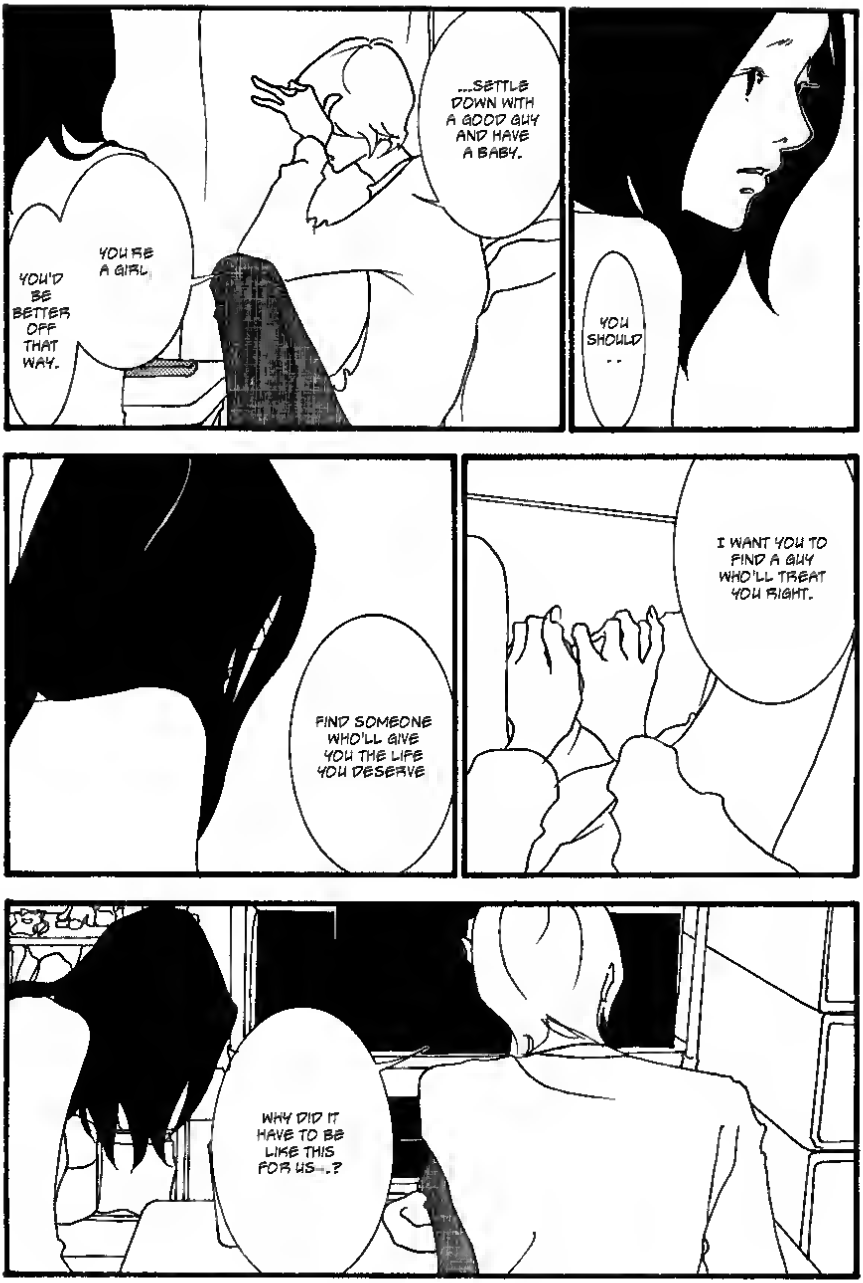
"WHAT SHOULD I DO TO MAKE YOU STAY WITH ME?"

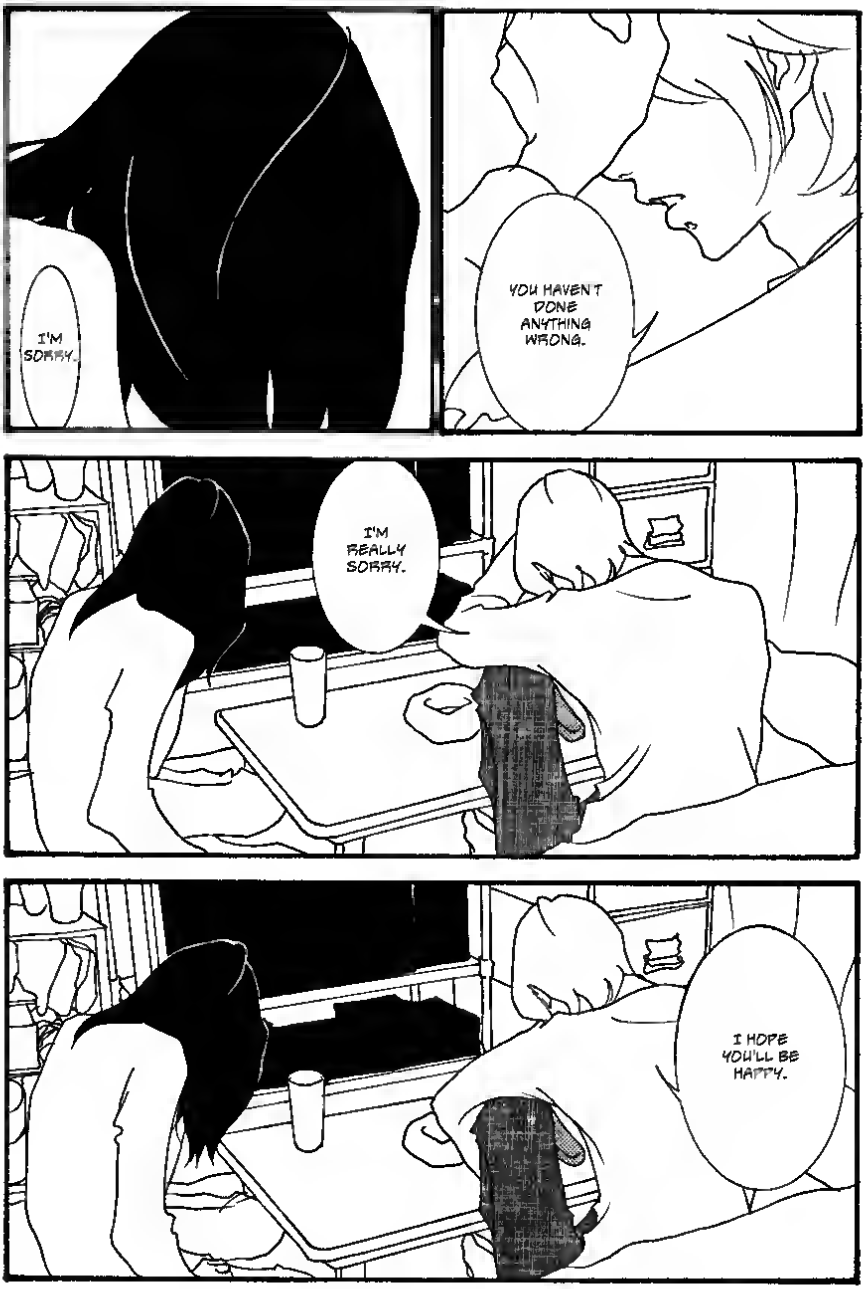


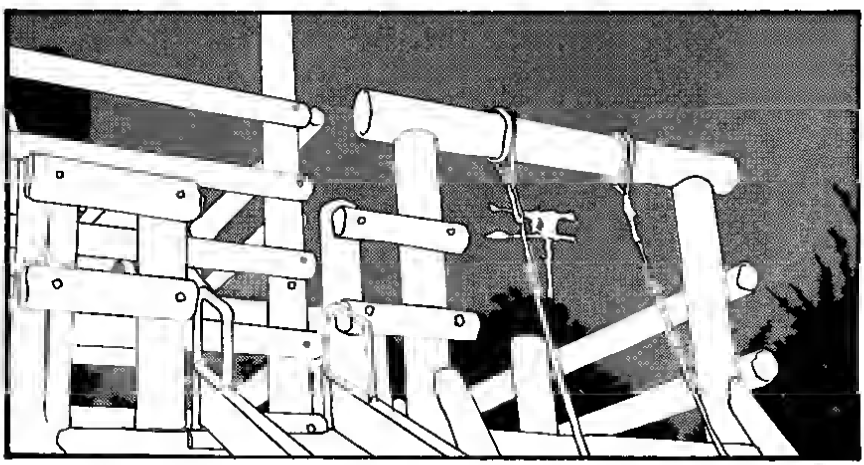

THIS IS BORING. MIND IF I TURN IT OFF?
GO AHEAD.
...WHAT?
CAN WE...
...TALK ABOUT SOMETHING?
HUH?
WHAT...?
...

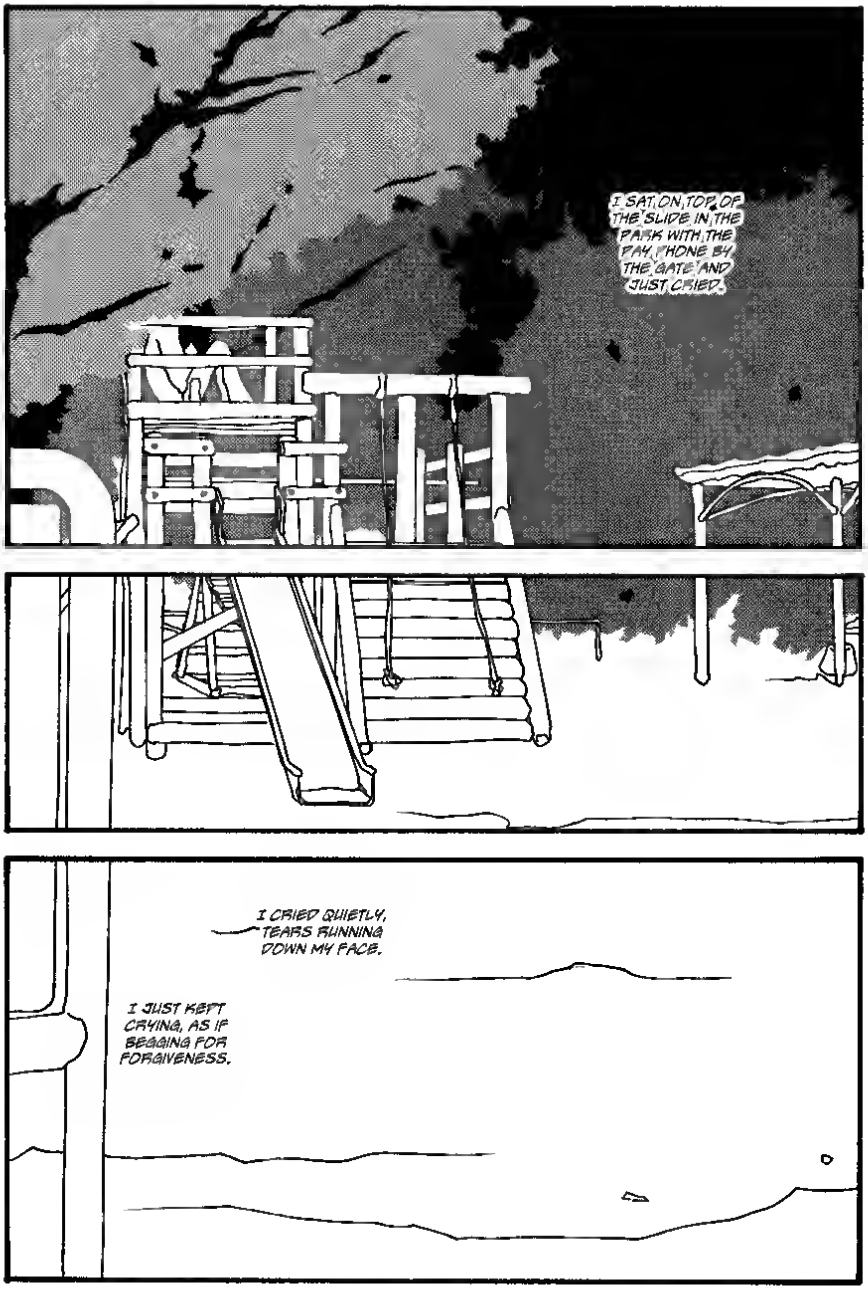

DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD
...
BREAK UP?
...
Huh...?
I THINK WE SHOULD.
I THINK IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR US.


I...
I REALLY DO WANT TO BE A MUSICIAN.
I DON'T REALLY KNOW HOW TO SAY IT, BUT...
AS LONG AS I'M WITH YOU... WE'LL GET BY SOMEHOW.
AND I'M JUST TAKING ADVANTAGE OF YOU.
BUT I STILL THINK TO MYSELF, LIKE...
AND I HATE THAT YOU HAVE TO MAKE SACRIFICES BECAUSE OF ME.
I'M RELYING ON YOU TOO MUCH...
AND ...
...IT'S FUCKING ME UP.


...SETTLE DOWN WITH A GOOD GUY AND HAVE A BABY.
YOU'RE A GIRL.
YOU'D BE BETTER OFF THAT WAY.
YOU SHOULD..
I WANT YOU TO FIND A GUY WHO'LL TREAT YOU RIGHT.
FIND SOMEONE WHO'LL GIVE YOU THE LIFE YOU DESERVE
WHY DID IT HAVE TO BE LIKE THIS FOR US...?


I'M SORRY.
YOU HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING WRONG.
I'M REALLY SORRY.
I HOPE YOU'LL BE HAPPY.




I SAT ON TOP OF THE SLIDE IN THE PARK WITH THE PAY PHONE BY THE GATE AND JUST CRIED.
I CRIED QUIETLY, TEARS RUNNING DOWN MY FACE.
I JUST KEPT CRYING, AS IF BEGGING FOR FORGIVENESS.

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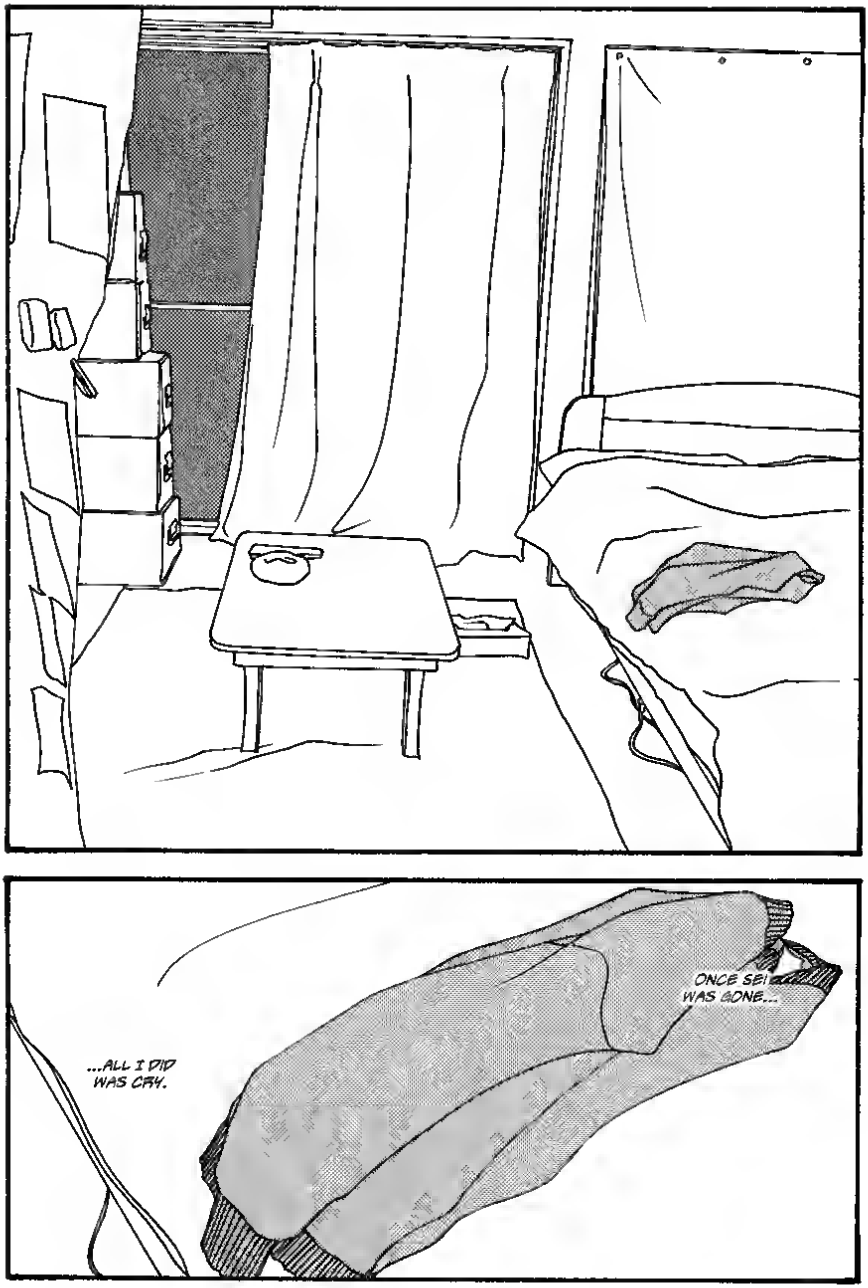
Lettered by
NOMAD SOUL

Chapter 9


ONCE SEI WAS GONE...
...ALL I DID WAS CRY.

...I GENTLY LAID MY CHEEK ON HIS CHEST AS HE SLEPT.

THAT LAST NIGHT, WHEN SEI SAID, "I'M JUST GONNA GO SOMEWHERE FOR A WHILE..."

...ABOUT BLOOD TYPES.

...IT MADE ME REMEMBER WHAT RIKA HAD ONCE SAID...

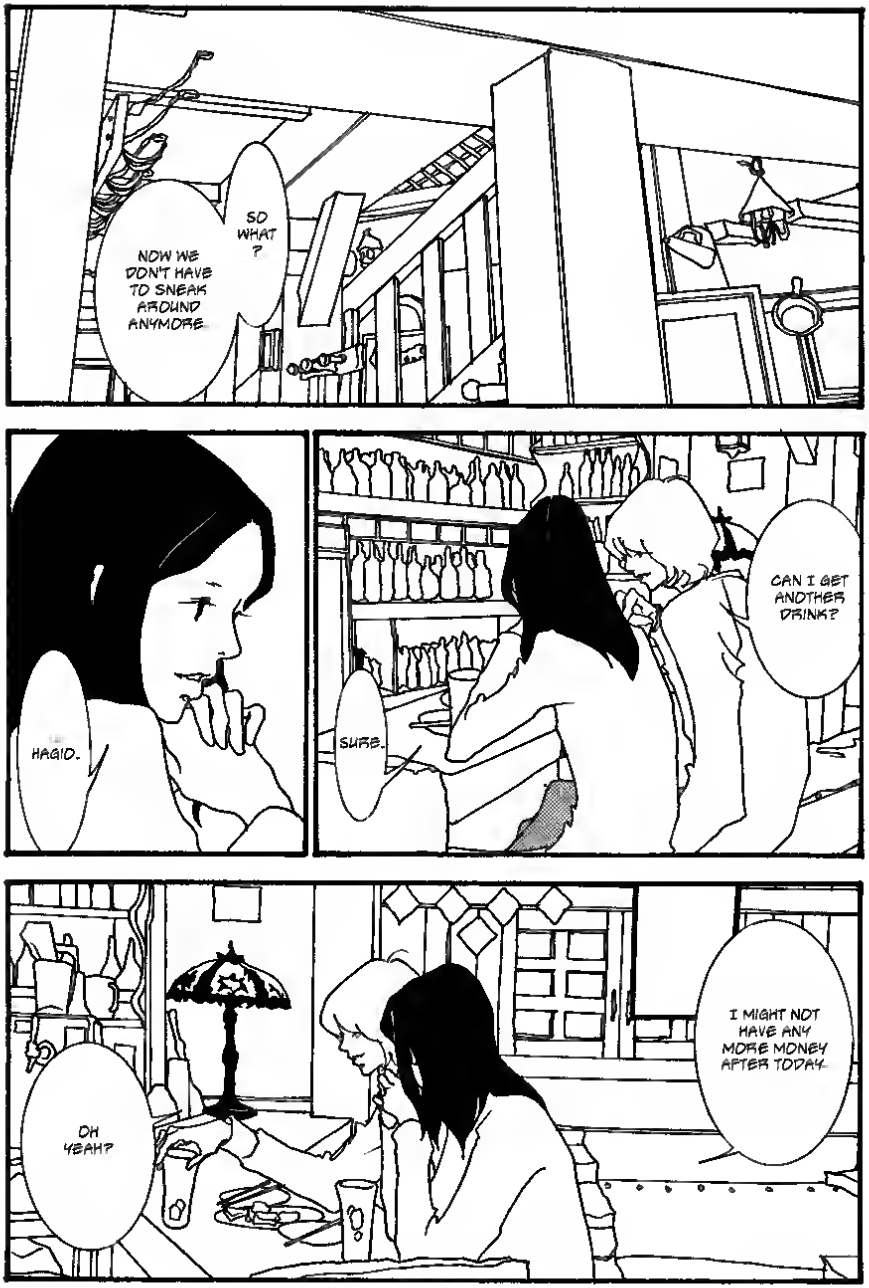
HE WAS SO WARM...

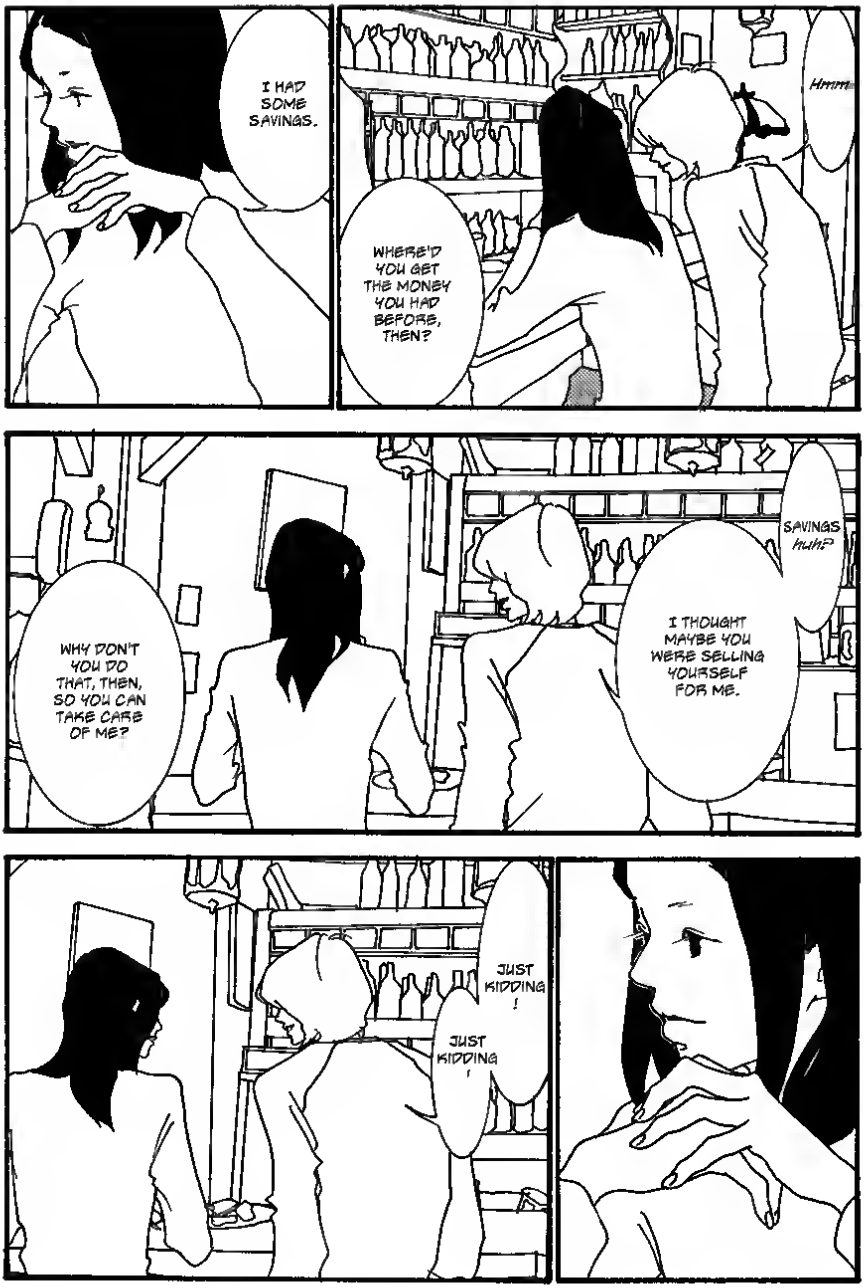
...BEFORE IT CAME TO THIS.

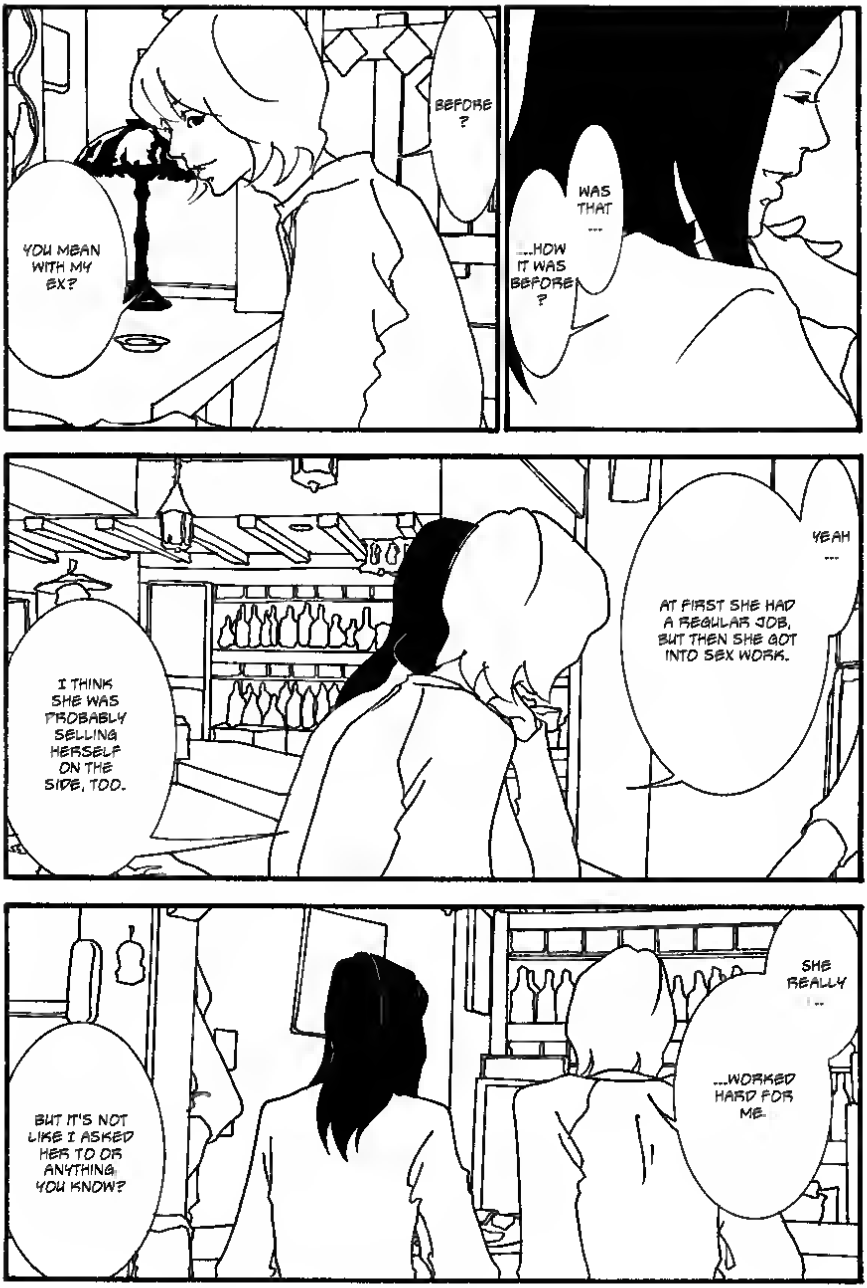
SO WE SHOULD HAVE TRIED TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER BETTER...

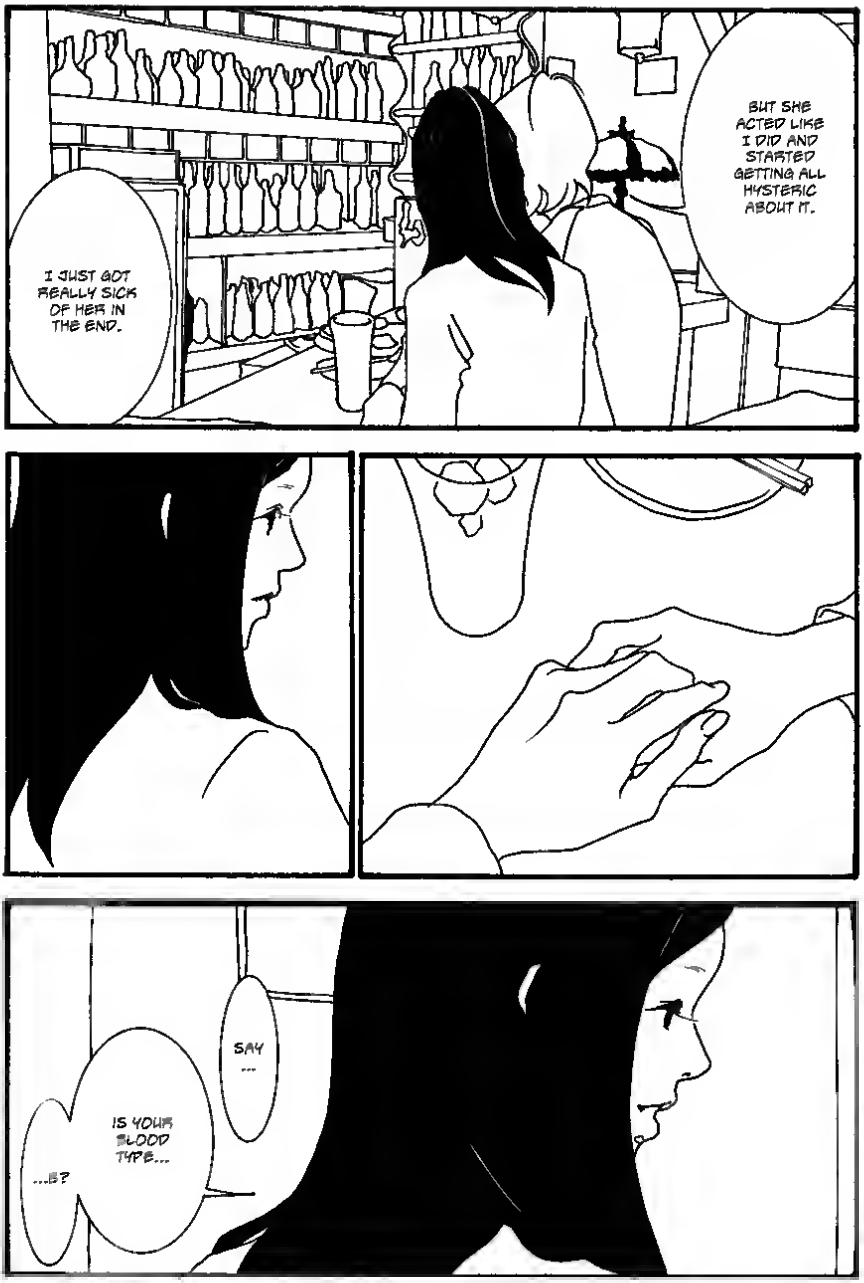
SEI AND I HAVE THE SAME TYPE OF BLOOD RUNNING THROUGH OUR VEINS.

HIS SCENT HAS ALMOST DISAPPEARED NOW, BUT STILL ALL I DO IS CRY.
I COULDN'T BRING MYSELF TO WASH AWAY HIS SCENT.
HE LEFT BEHIND SOME UNWASHED CLOTHES, BUT I COULDN'T BRING MYSELF TO WASH THEM.


NOW WE DON'T HAVE TO SNEAK AROUND ANYMORE.
SO WHAT?
HAGID.
SURE.
CAN I GET ANOTHER DRINK?
OH YEAH?
I MIGHT NOT HAVE ANY MORE MONEY AFTER TODAY.


I HAD SOME SAVINGS.
Hmm.
WHERE'D YOU GET THE MONEY YOU HAD BEFORE, THEN?
SAVINGS huh?
I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU WERE SELLING YOURSELF FOR ME.
WHY DON'T YOU DO THAT, THEN, SO YOU CAN TAKE CARE OF ME?
JUST KIDDING!
JUST KIDDING!

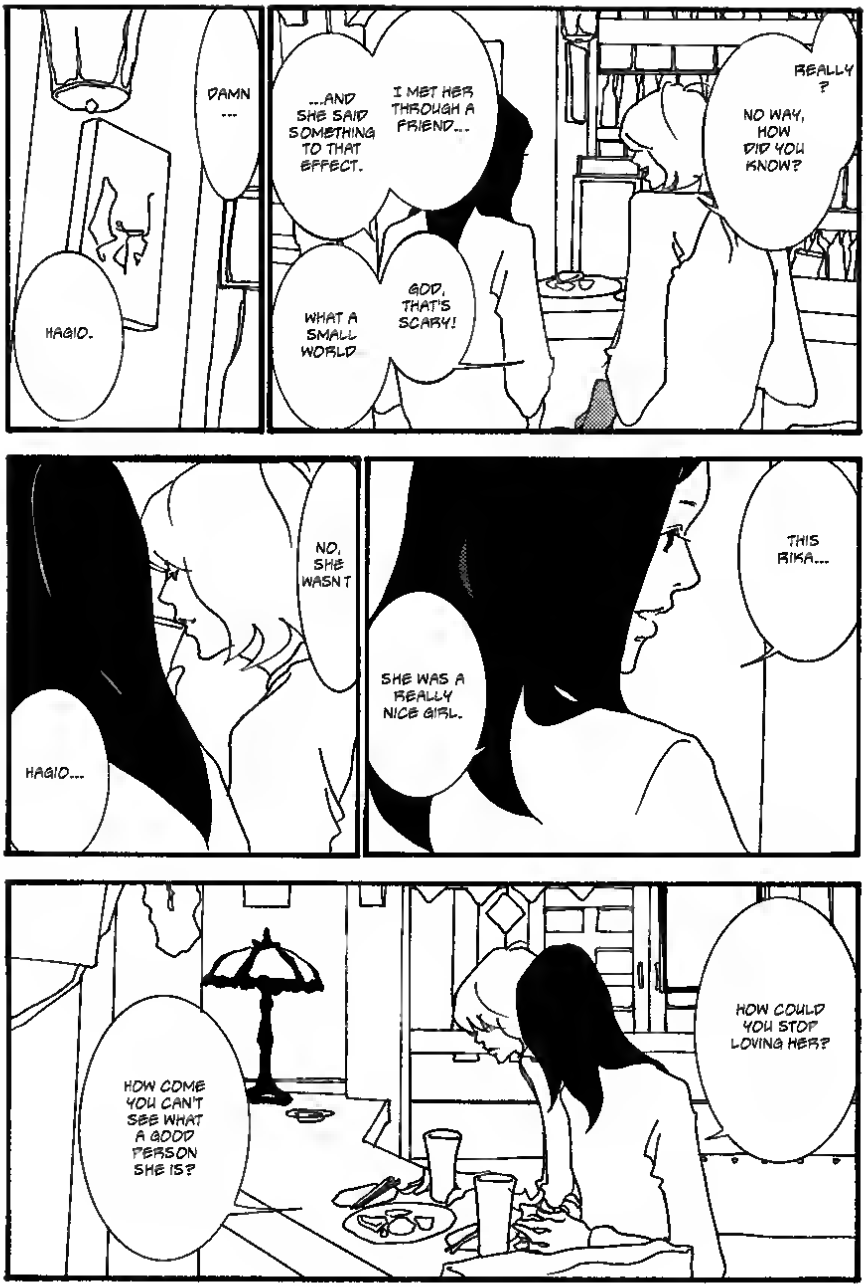

BEFORE ?
YOU MEAN WITH MY EX?
WAS THAT ---
...HOW IT WAS BEFORE ?
YEAH ---
AT FIRST SHE HAD A REGULAR JOB, BUT THEN SHE GOT INTO SEX WORK.
I THINK SHE WAS PROBABLY SELLING HERSELF ON THE SIDE, TOO.
SHE REALLY ...
...WORKED HARD FOR ME.
BUT IT'S NOT LIKE I ASKED HER TO OR ANYTHING. YOU KNOW?


I JUST GOT REALLY SICK OF HER IN THE END.
BUT SHE ACTED LIKE I DID AND STARTED GETTING ALL HYSTERIC ABOUT IT.
SAY ...
IS YOUR BLOOD TYPE...
...B?

THAT GIRL ...
YEAH, BUT HOW COME?
HUH?

WAS HER NAME AIKA?

HOW ...
...DID YOU KNOW?

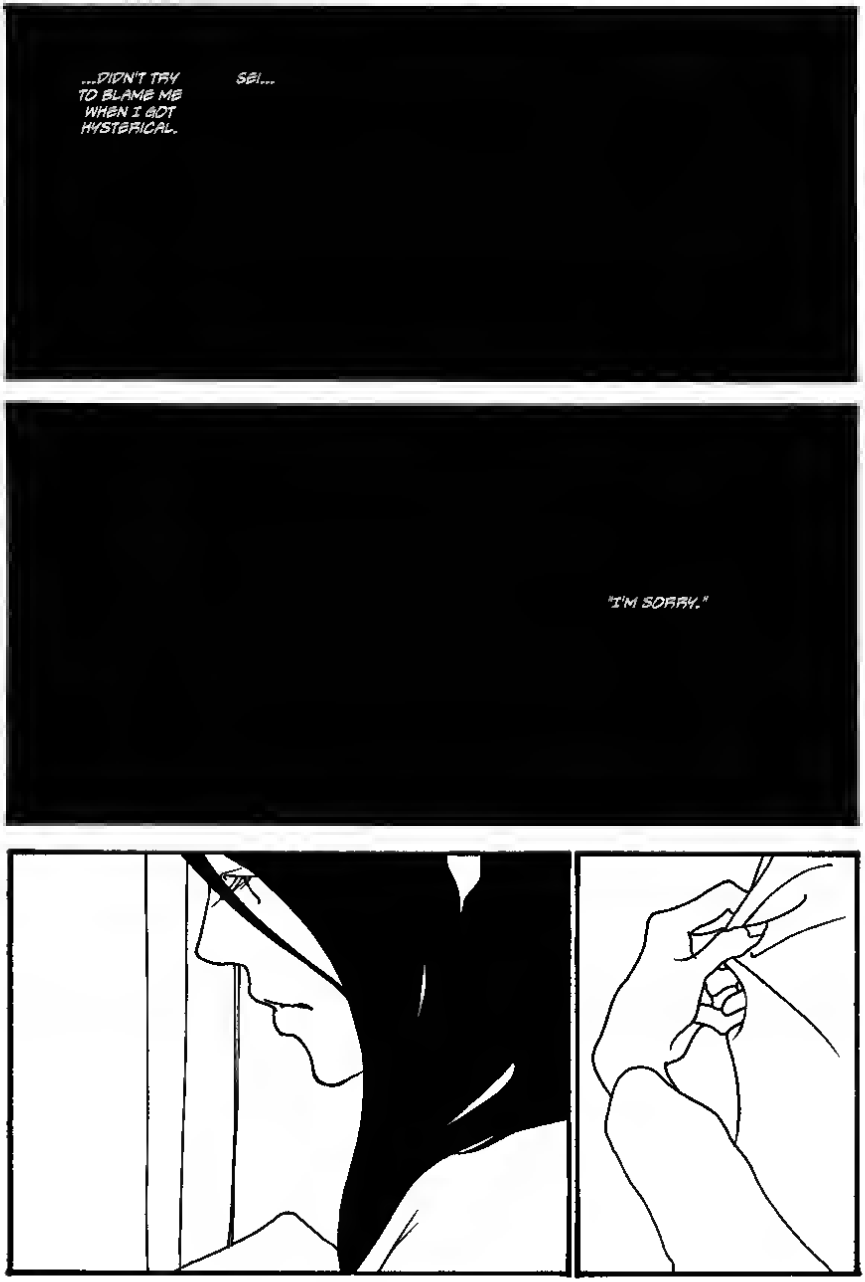

DAMN ...
HAGIO.
...AND SHE SAID SOMETHING TO THAT EFFECT.
I MET HER THROUGH A FRIEND...
WHAT A SMALL WORLD
GOD, THAT'S SCARY!
REALLY ?
NO WAY, HOW DID YOU KNOW?
NO, SHE WASN'T
HAGIO...
THIS RIKA...
SHE WAS A REALLY NICE GIRL.
HOW COME YOU CAN'T SEE WHAT A GOOD PERSON SHE IS?
HOW COULD YOU STOP LOVING HER?

Huh?

THAT WAS...
...PROBABLY RIKA ALL THOSE YEARS AGO.

THAT WAS RIKA.
...WHEN HAGIO MADE ME LEAVE, SAYING, "MY ROOMMATE'LL BE HOME SOON."
YEARS AGO...

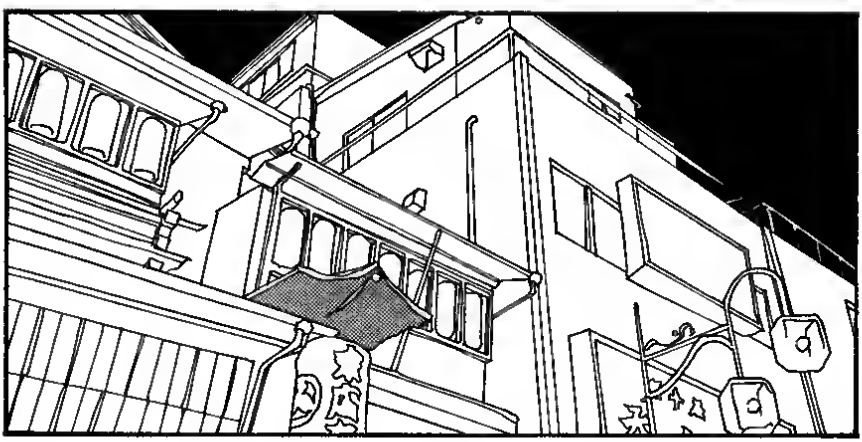
BECAUSE WE BOTH TRIED TO LOVE THE SAME PERSON THE SAME WAY.
IT FELT COMPLETELY NATURAL.
IT DIDN'T FEEL AT ALL STRANGE TO REALISE IT WAS HER.

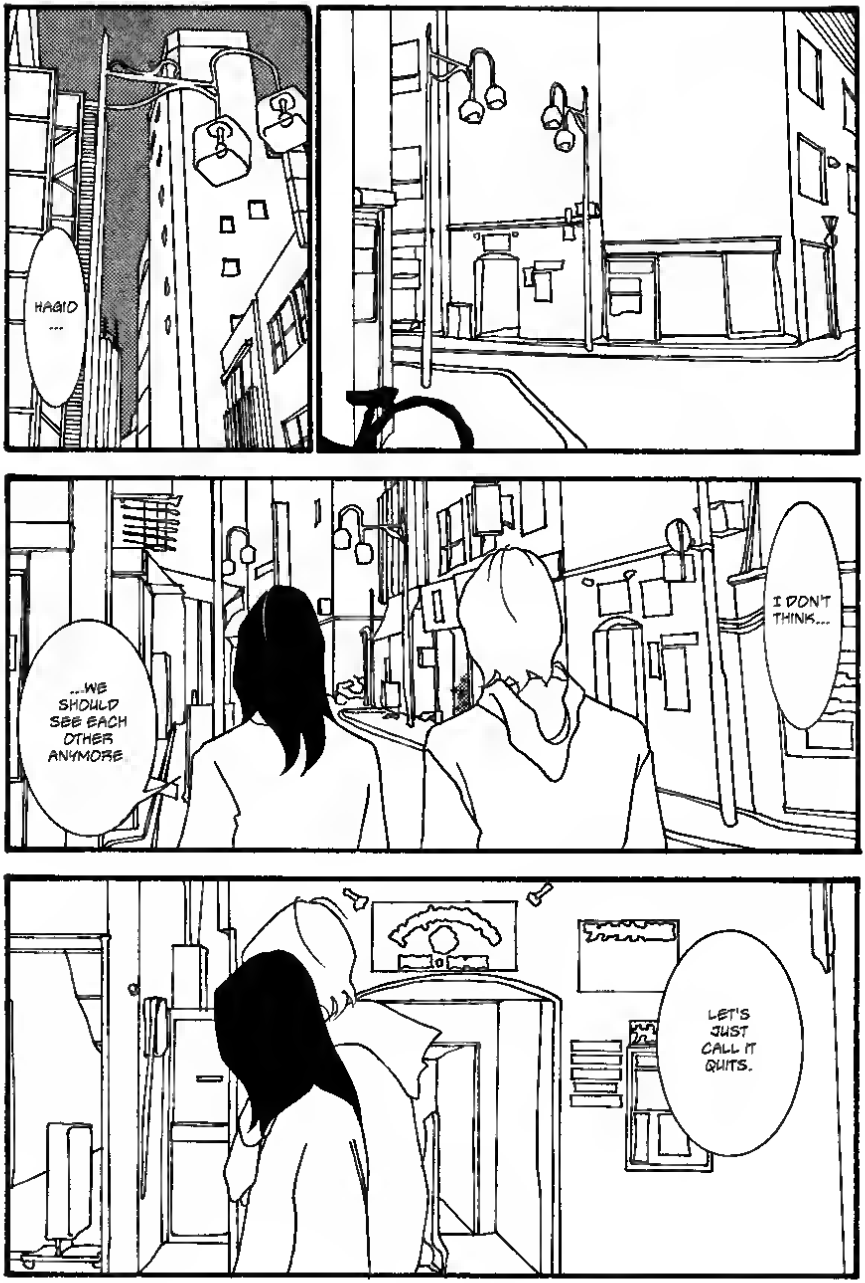

...DIDN'T TRY TO BLAME ME WHEN I GOT HYSTERICAL.
SEI...
"I'M SORRY."

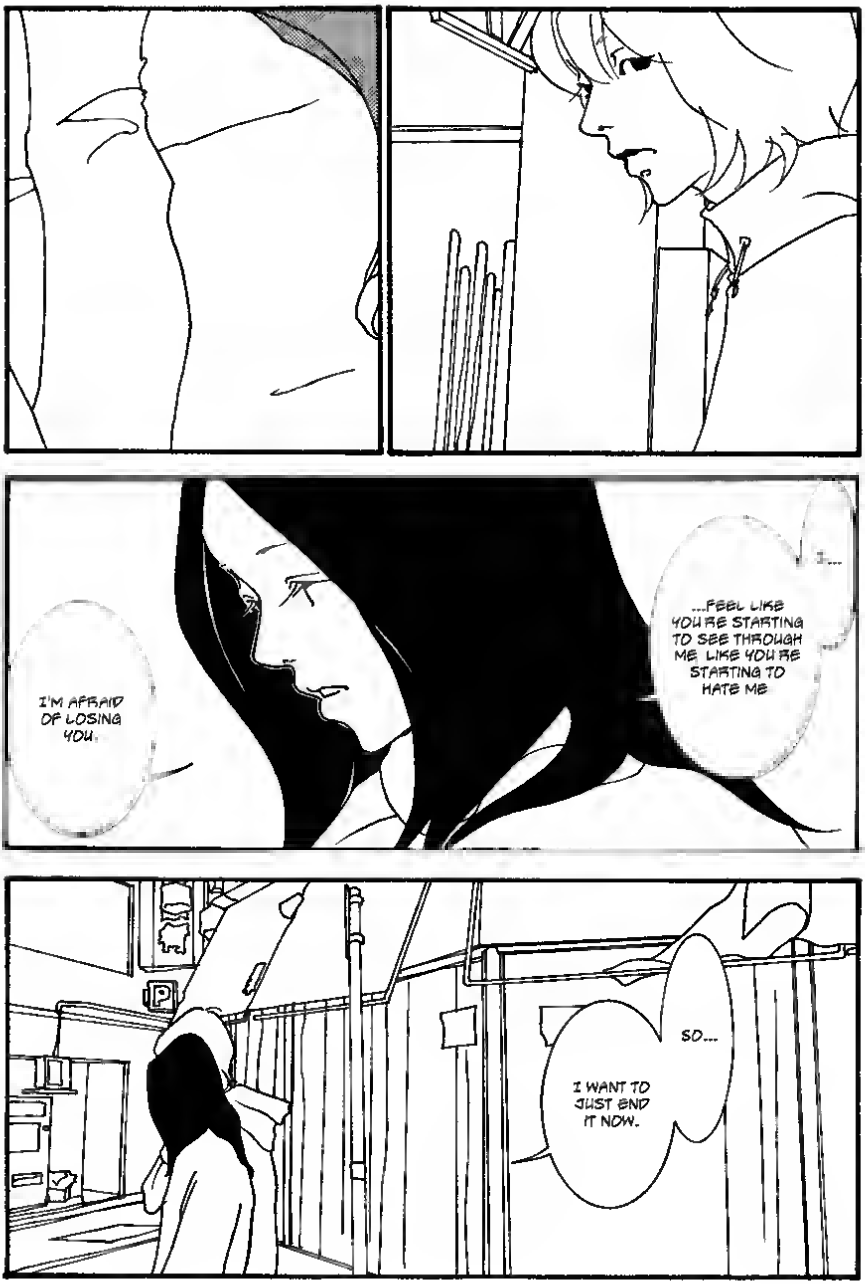
TODAY, I SHOULD HAVE...

..DRESSED UP A LOT MORE.

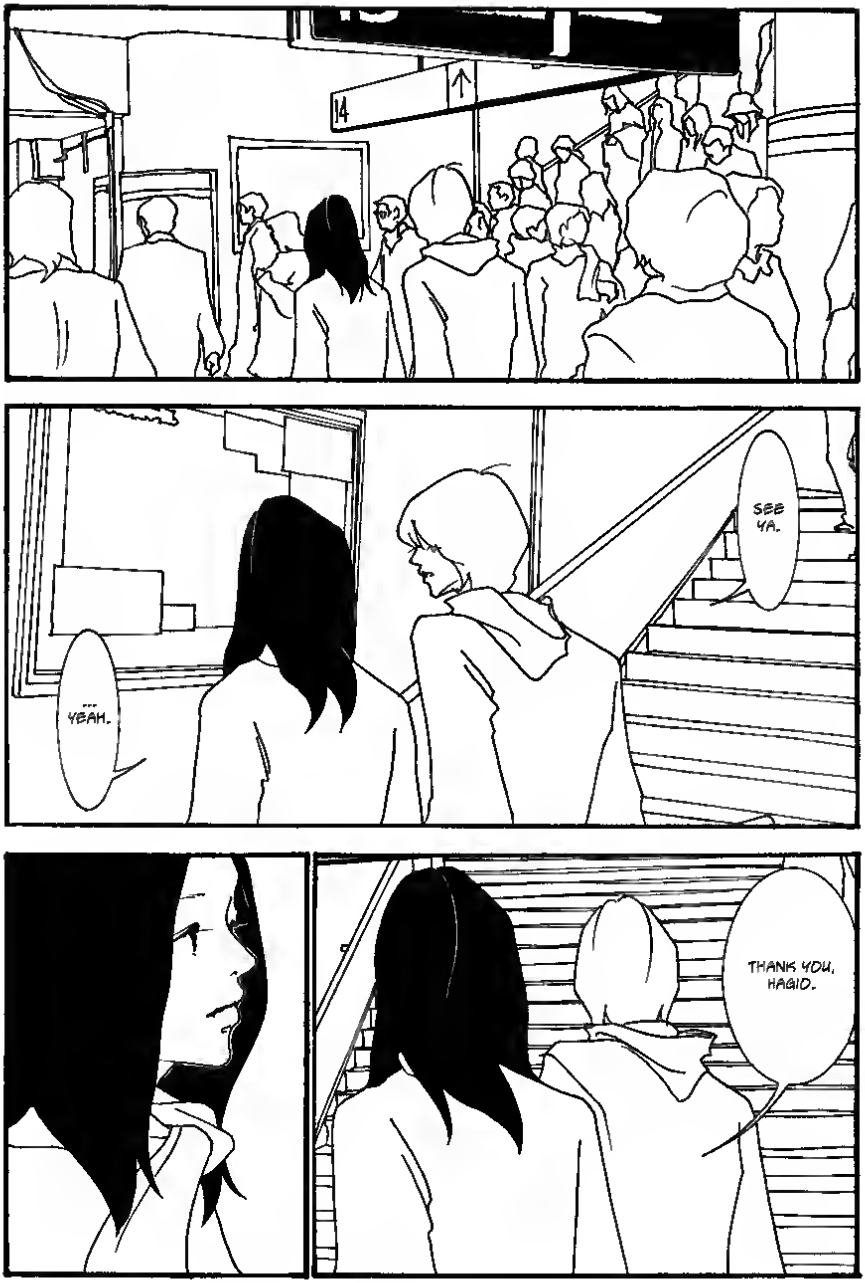
A WHOLE LOT MORE...

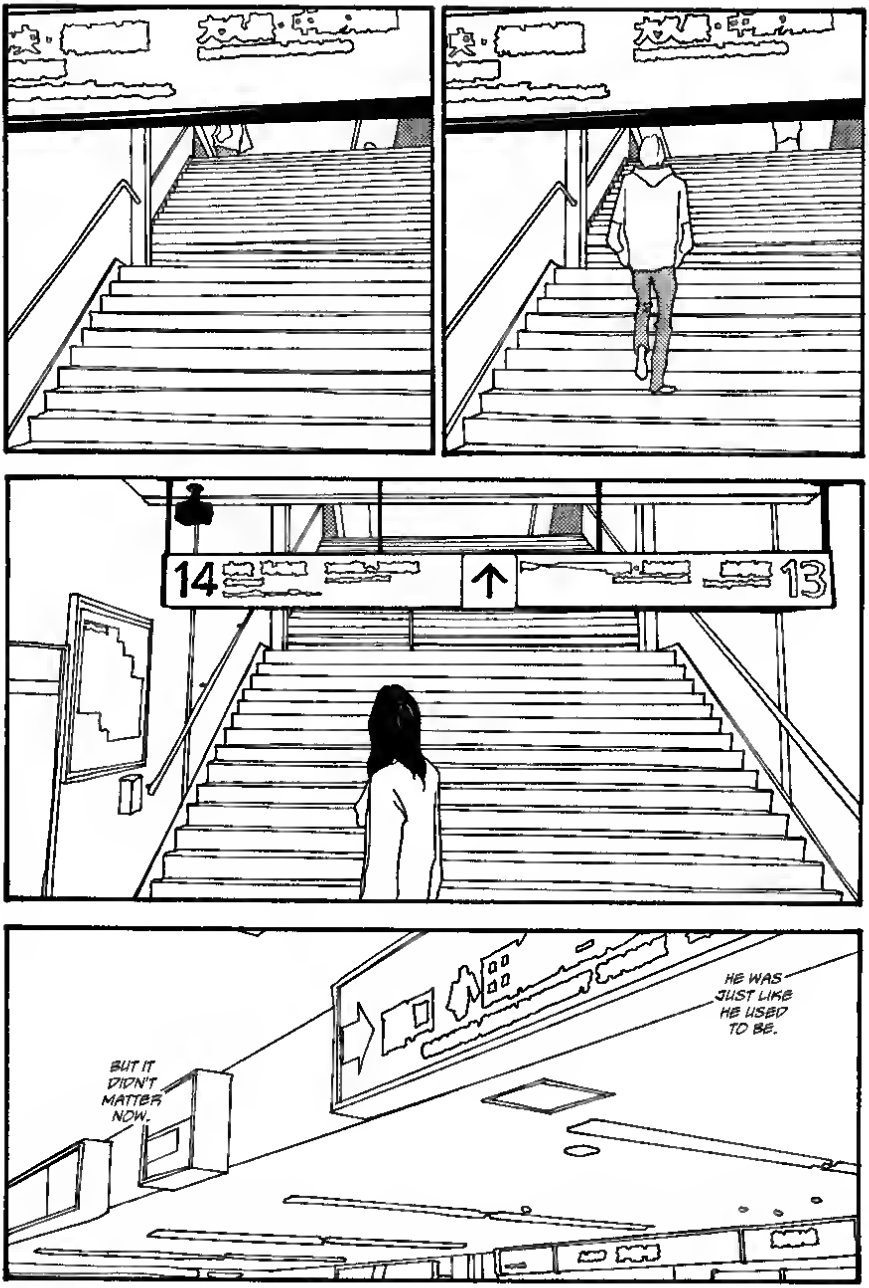



HAGID
...
...WE SHOULD SEE EACH OTHER ANYMORE
I DON'T THINK...
LET'S JUST CALL IT QUITS.


I'M AFRAID OF LOSING YOU.
I... ...FEEL LIKE YOU'RE STARTING TO SEE THROUGH ME. LIKE YOU'RE STARTING TO HATE ME
SO... I WANT TO JUST END IT NOW.

I THINK I WAS JUST INTERESTED IN YOU BECAUSE YOU HAD A BOYFRIEND.
...
YEAH.


14
SEE YA.
...YEAH.
THANK YOU, HAGIO.


14
13
HE WAS JUST LIKE HE USED TO BE.
BUT IT DIDN'T MATTER NOW.

I LOVED HIM SO, SO MUCH.

SO, SO MUCH.

Final Chapter

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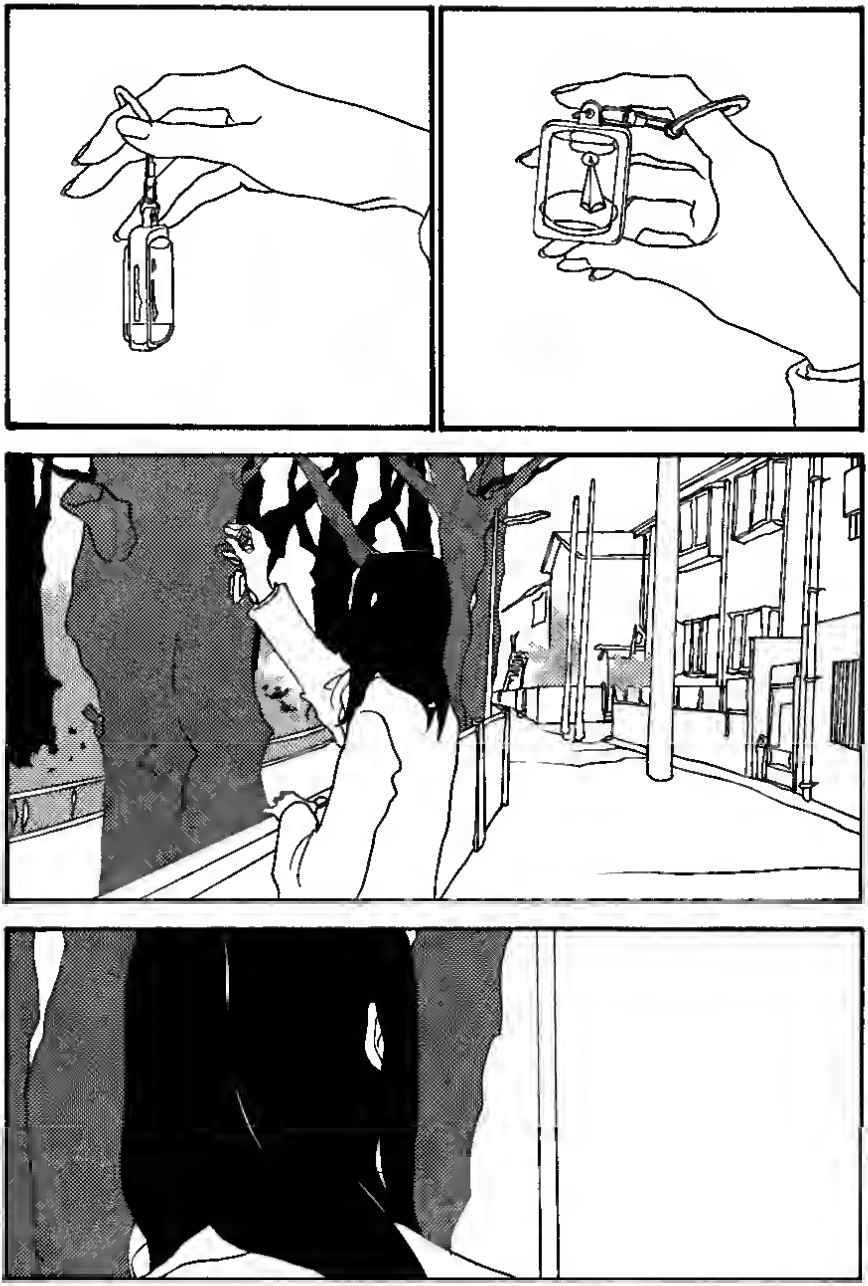
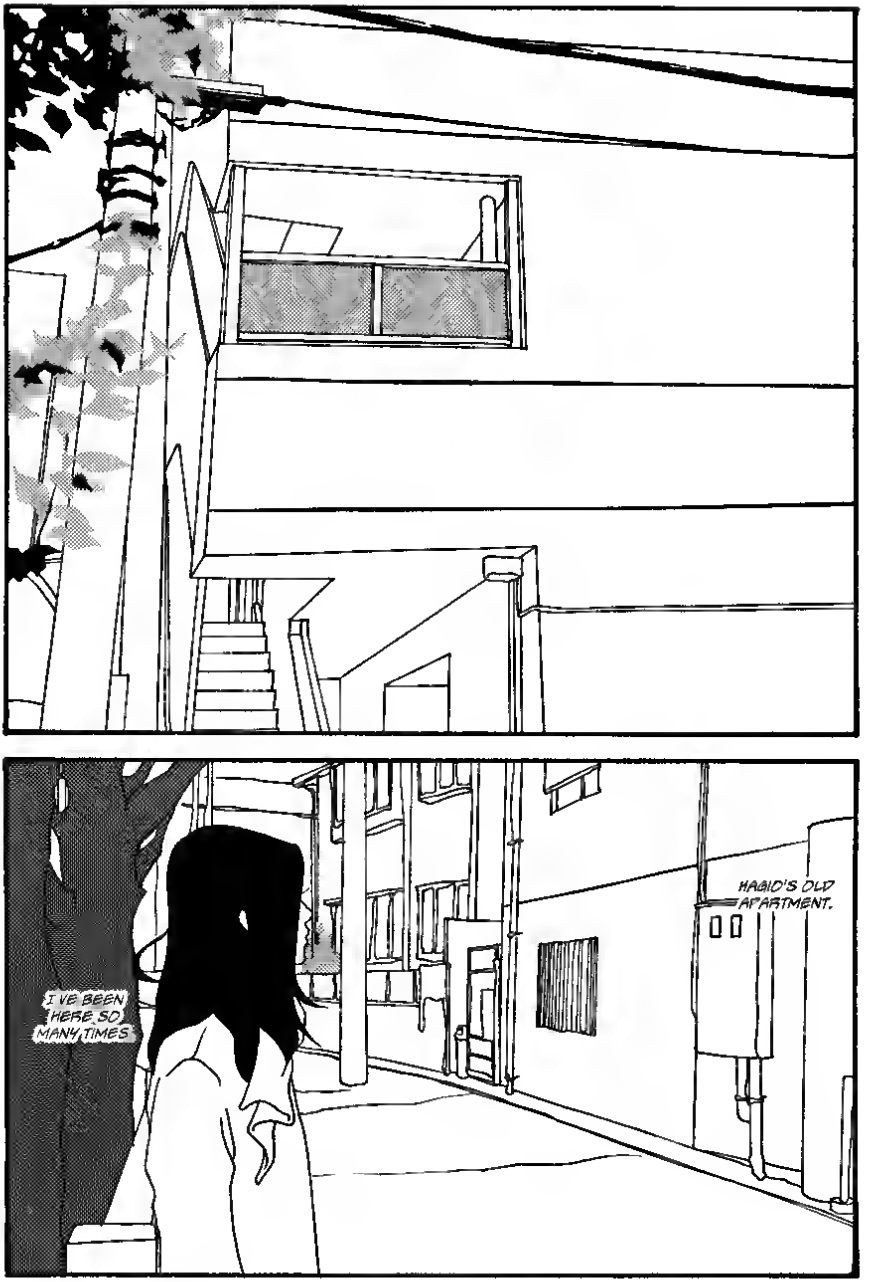
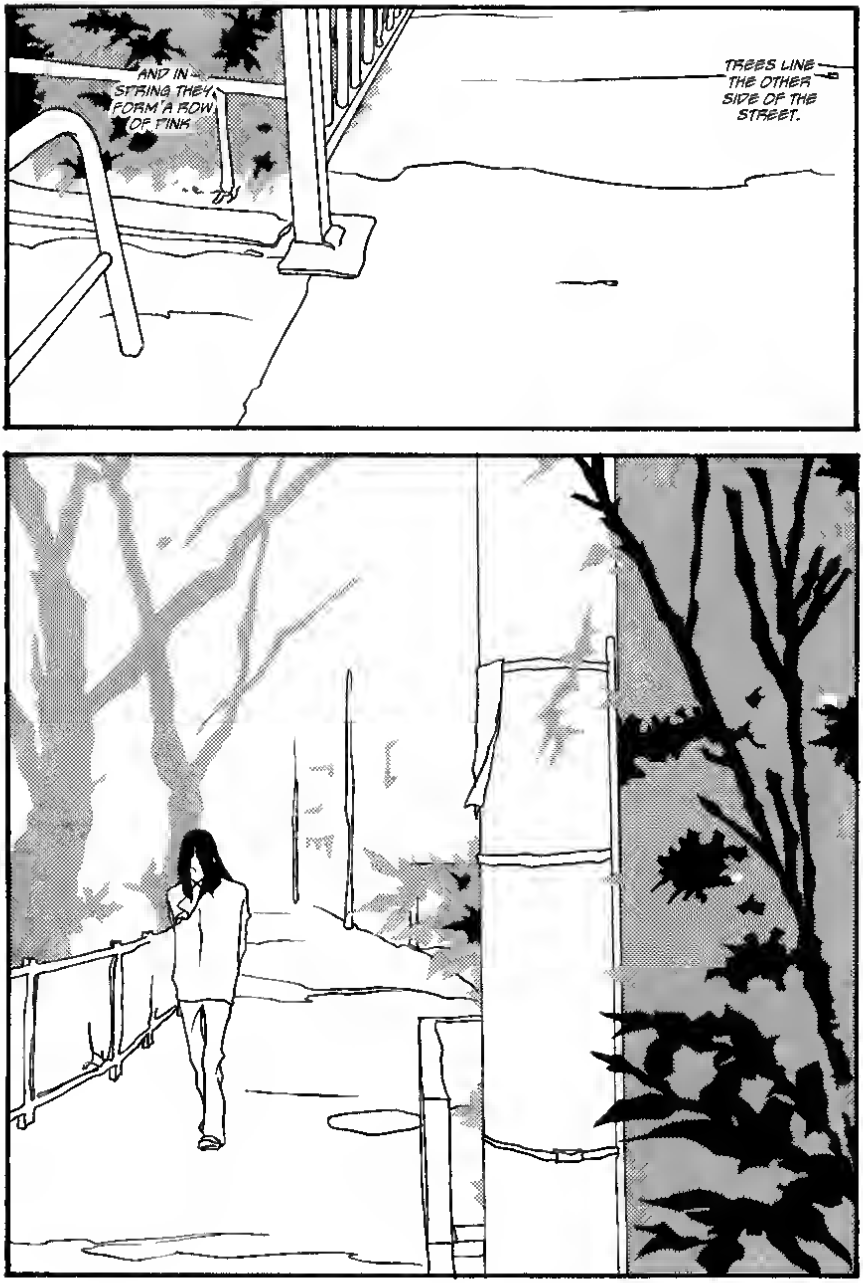
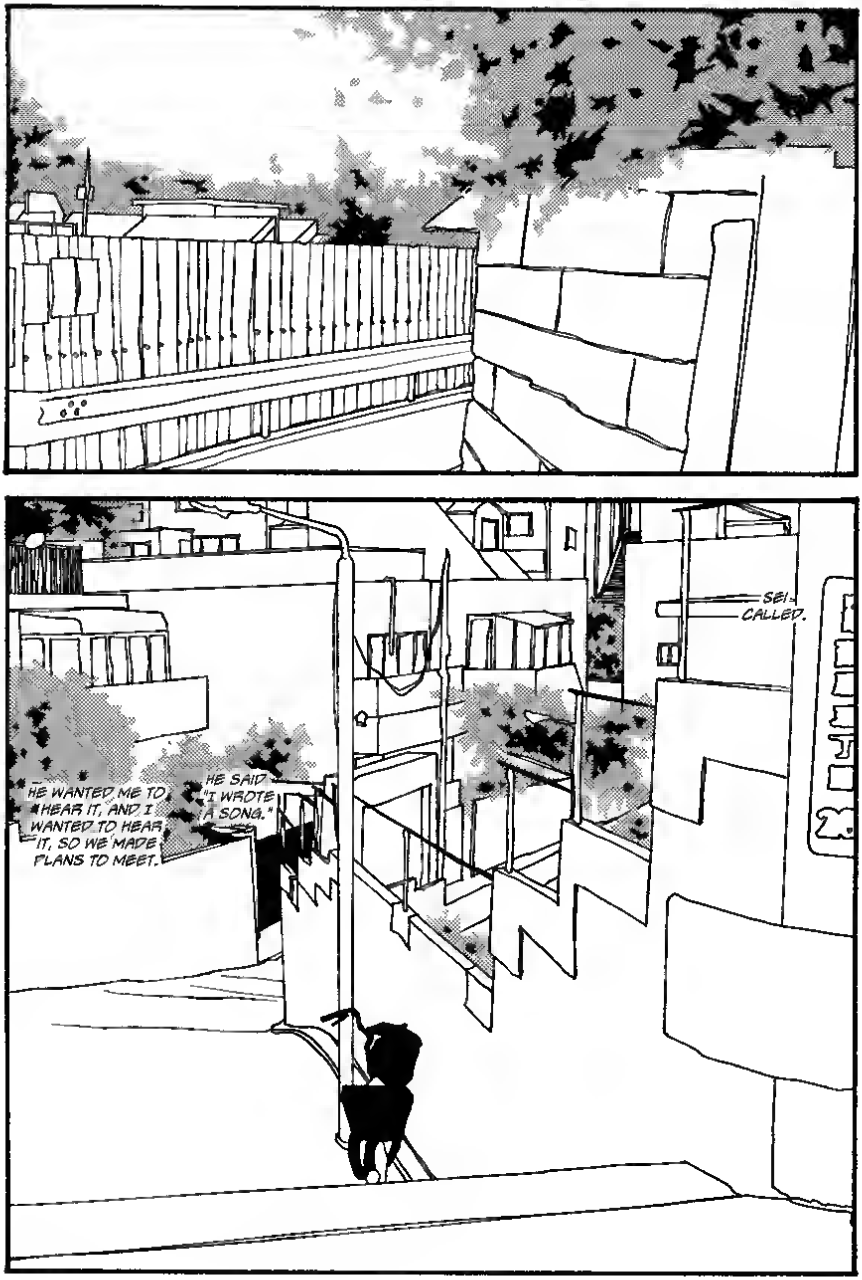
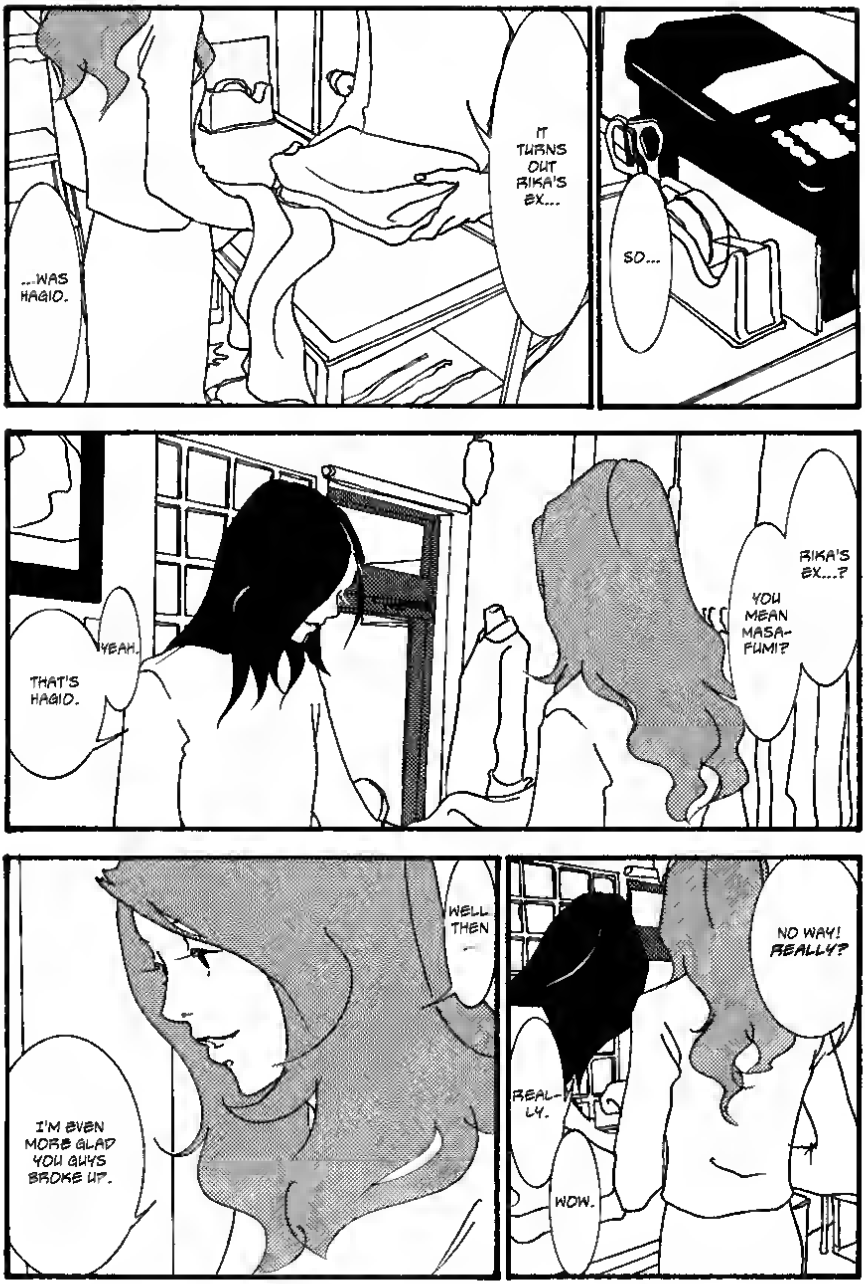
DILLE
Lettered by
NOMAD SOUL

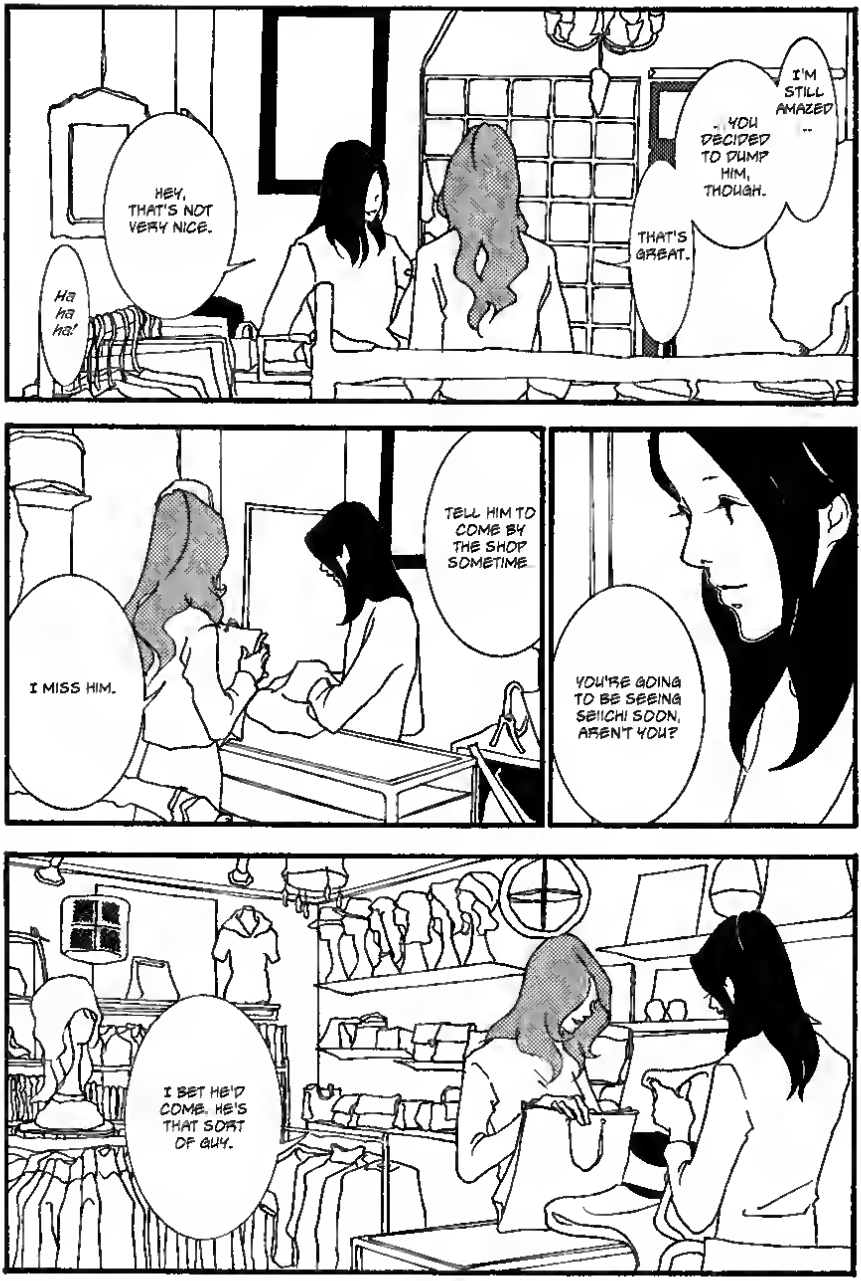


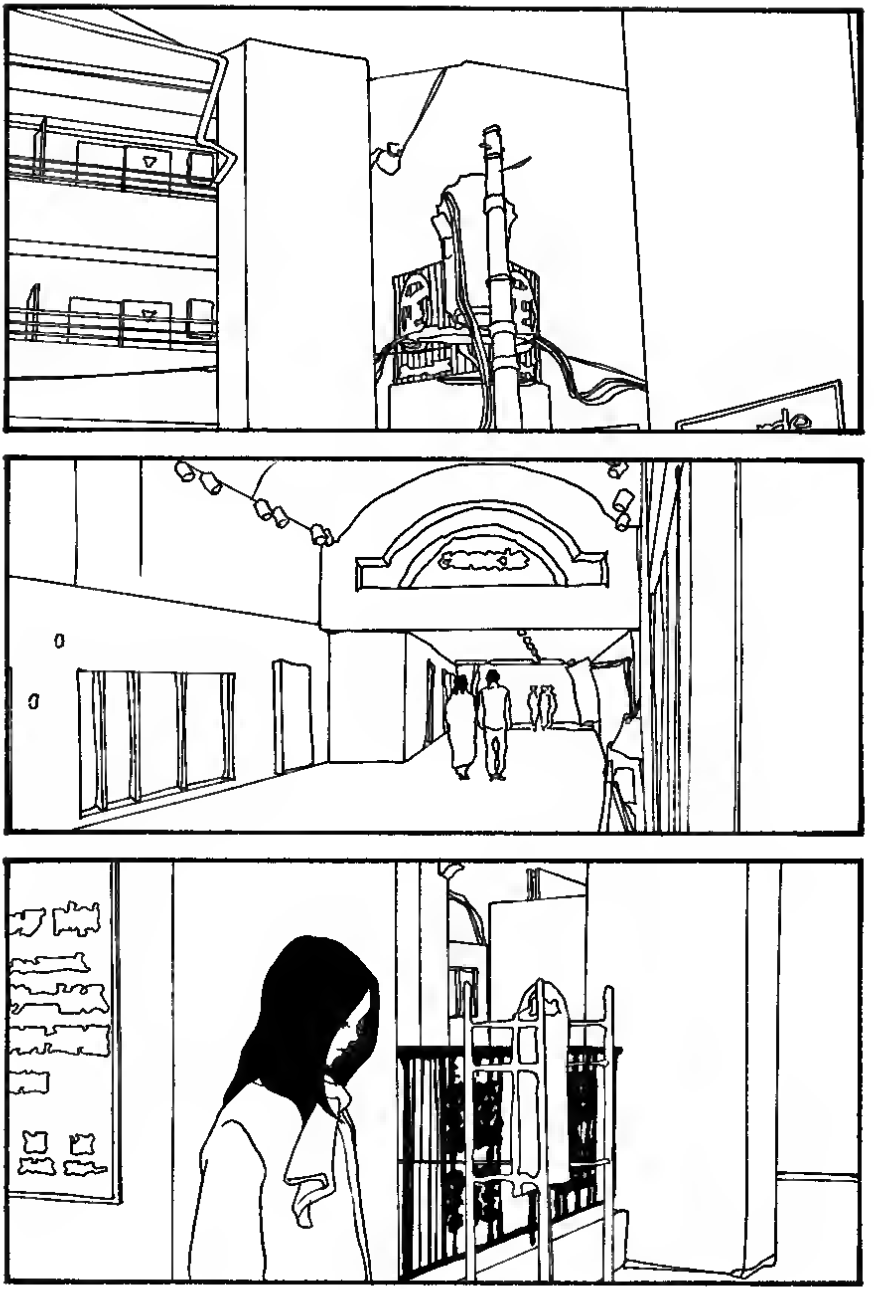

I'VE BEEN HERE SO MANY TIMES.
HABID'S OLD APARTMENT.

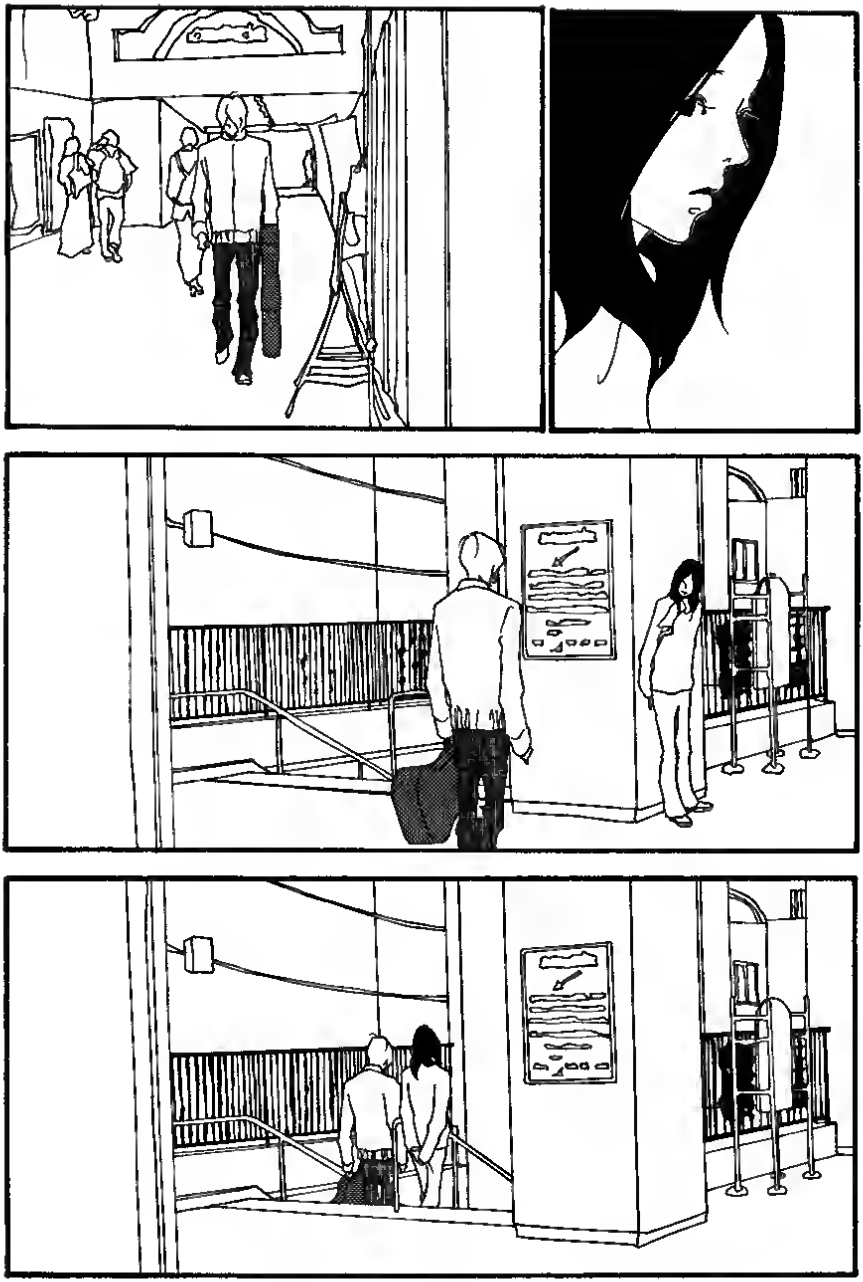

AND IN STRING THEY FORM A ROW OF FINK
TREES LINE THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STREET.

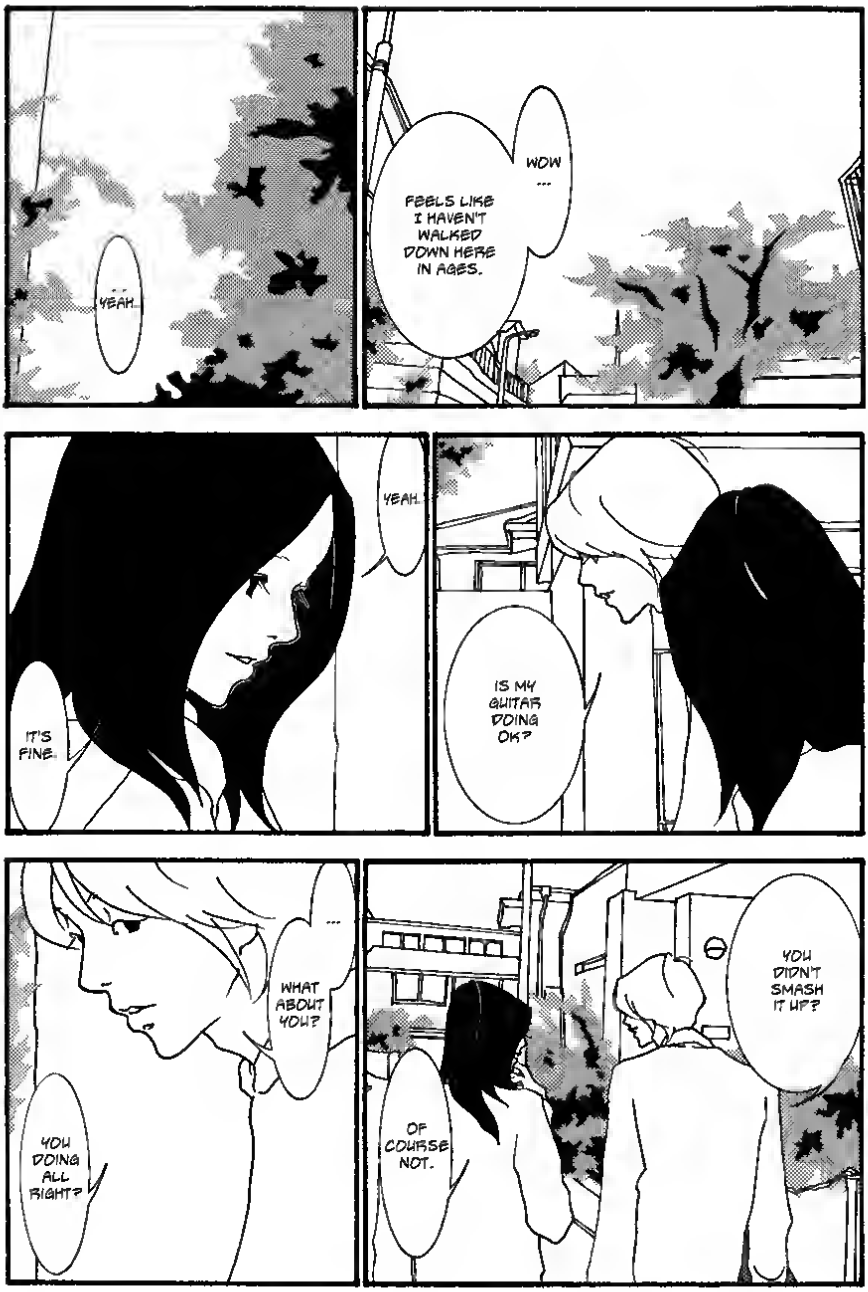

SEI CALLED.
HE SAID "I WROTE A SONG."
"HE WANTED ME TO HEAR IT, AND I WANTED TO HEAR IT, SO WE MADE PLANS TO MEET."


...WAS HAGIO.
IT TURNS OUT RIKA'S EX...
SO...
THAT'S HAGIO.
YEAH.
YOU MEAN MASA-FUMI?
RIKA'S EX...?
I'M EVEN MORE GLAD YOU GUYS BROKE UP.
WELL THEN
REAL-LY.
WOW.
NO WAY! REALLY?

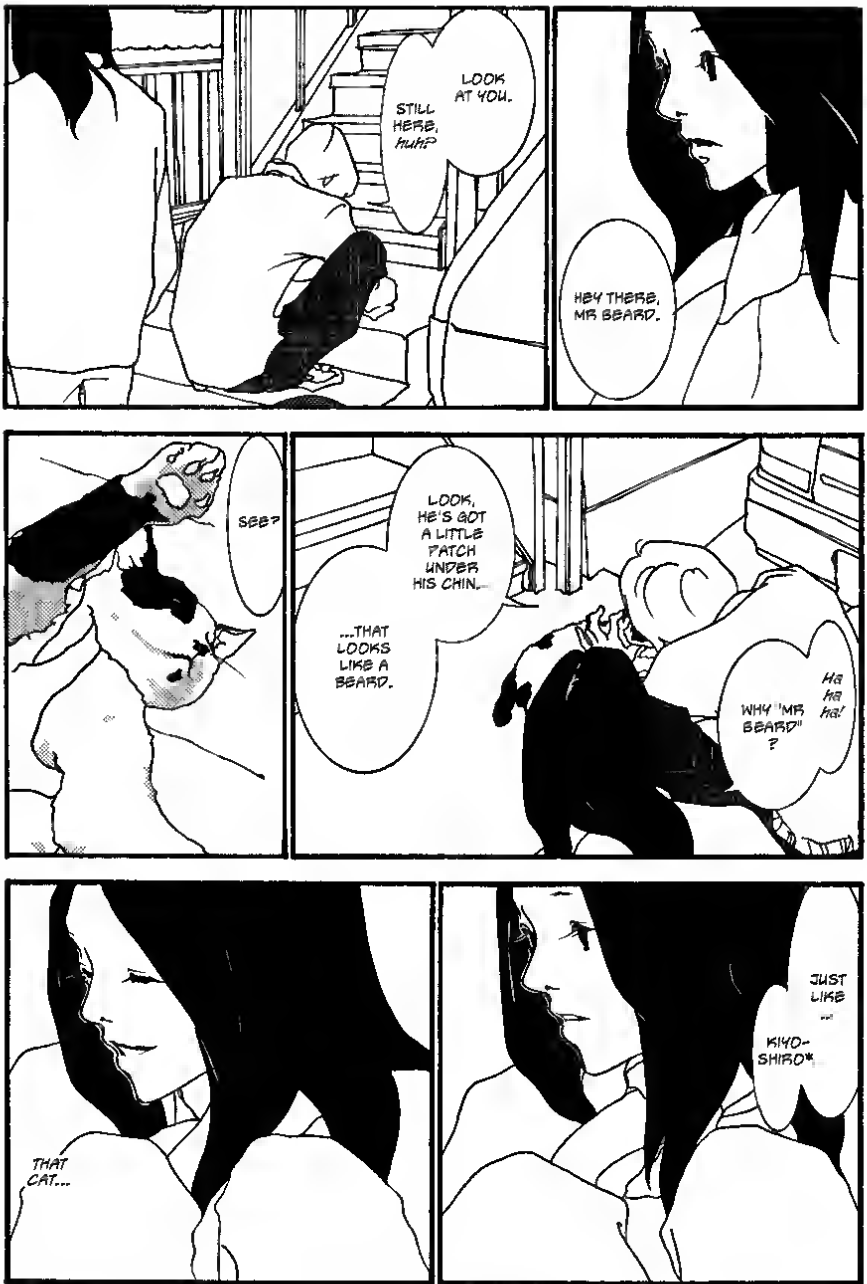

I'M STILL AMAZED ...
YOU DECIDED TO DUMP HIM, THOUGH.
THAT'S GREAT.
HEY, THAT'S NOT VERY NICE.
Ha ha ha!
TELL HIM TO COME BY THE SHOP SOMETIME.
I MISS HIM.
YOU'RE GOING TO BE SEEING SEIICHI SOON, AREN'T YOU?
I BET HE'D COME. HE'S THAT SORT OF GUY.



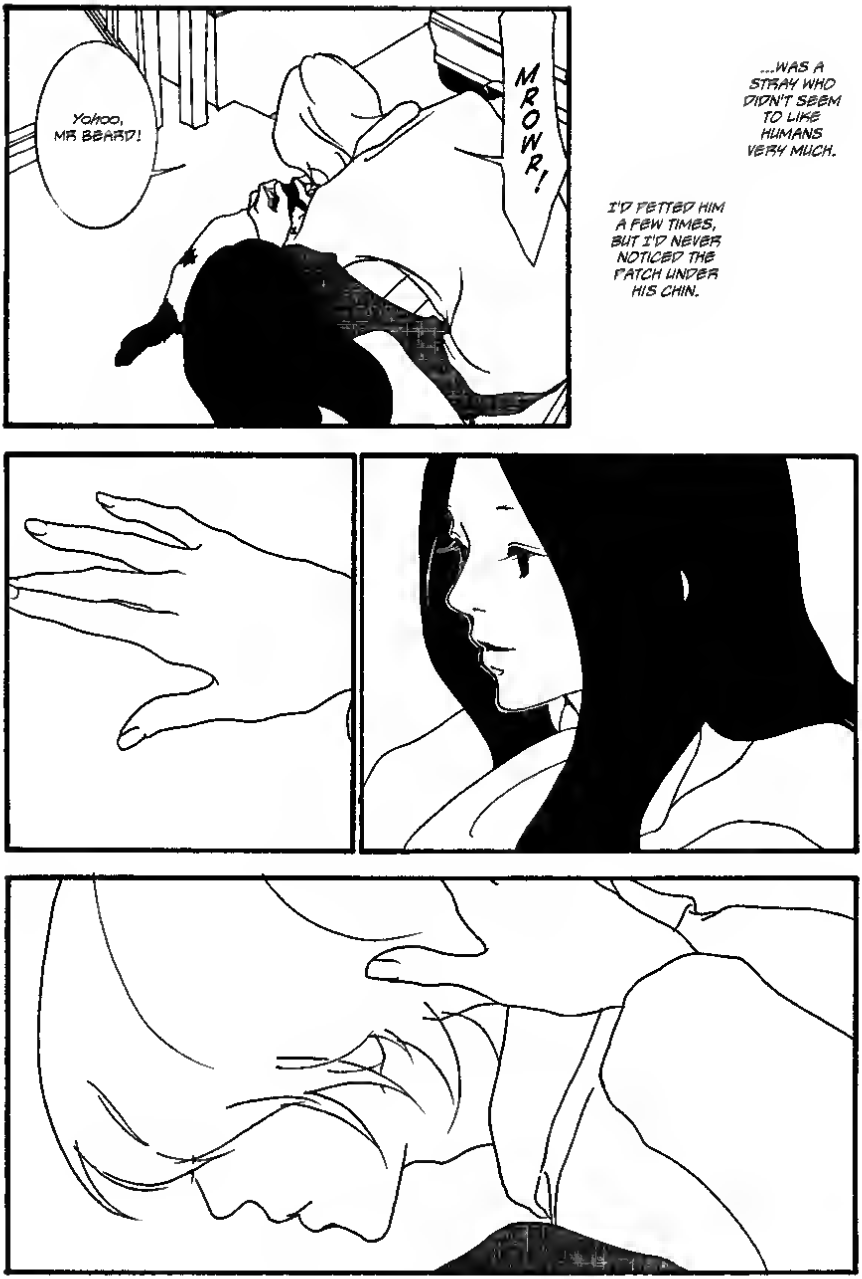


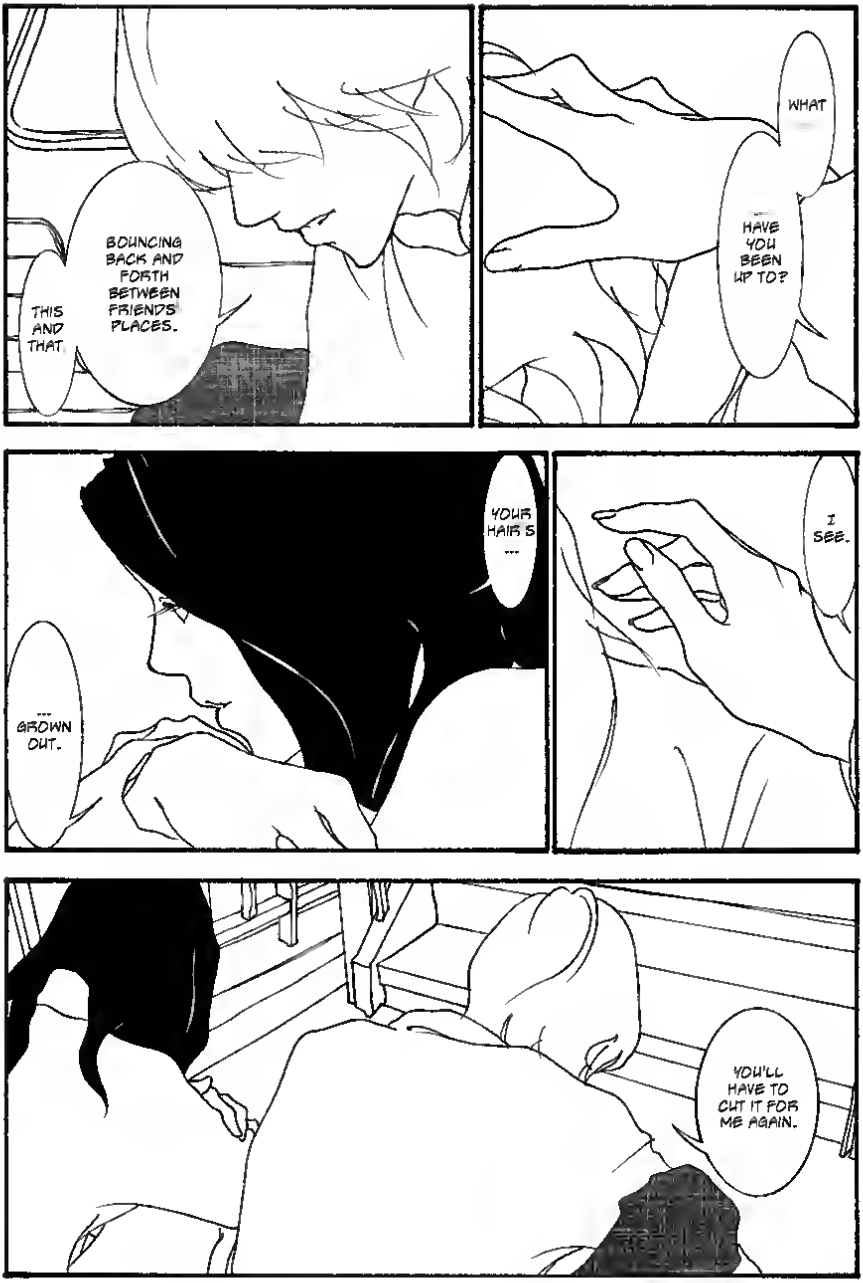

...
YEAH.
WOW
...
FEELS LIKE I HAVEN'T WALKED DOWN HERE IN AGES.
YEAH.
IT'S FINE.
IS MY GUITAR DOING OK?
...
WHAT ABOUT YOU?
YOU DOING ALL RIGHT?
OF COURSE NOT.
YOU DIDN'T SMASH IT UP?

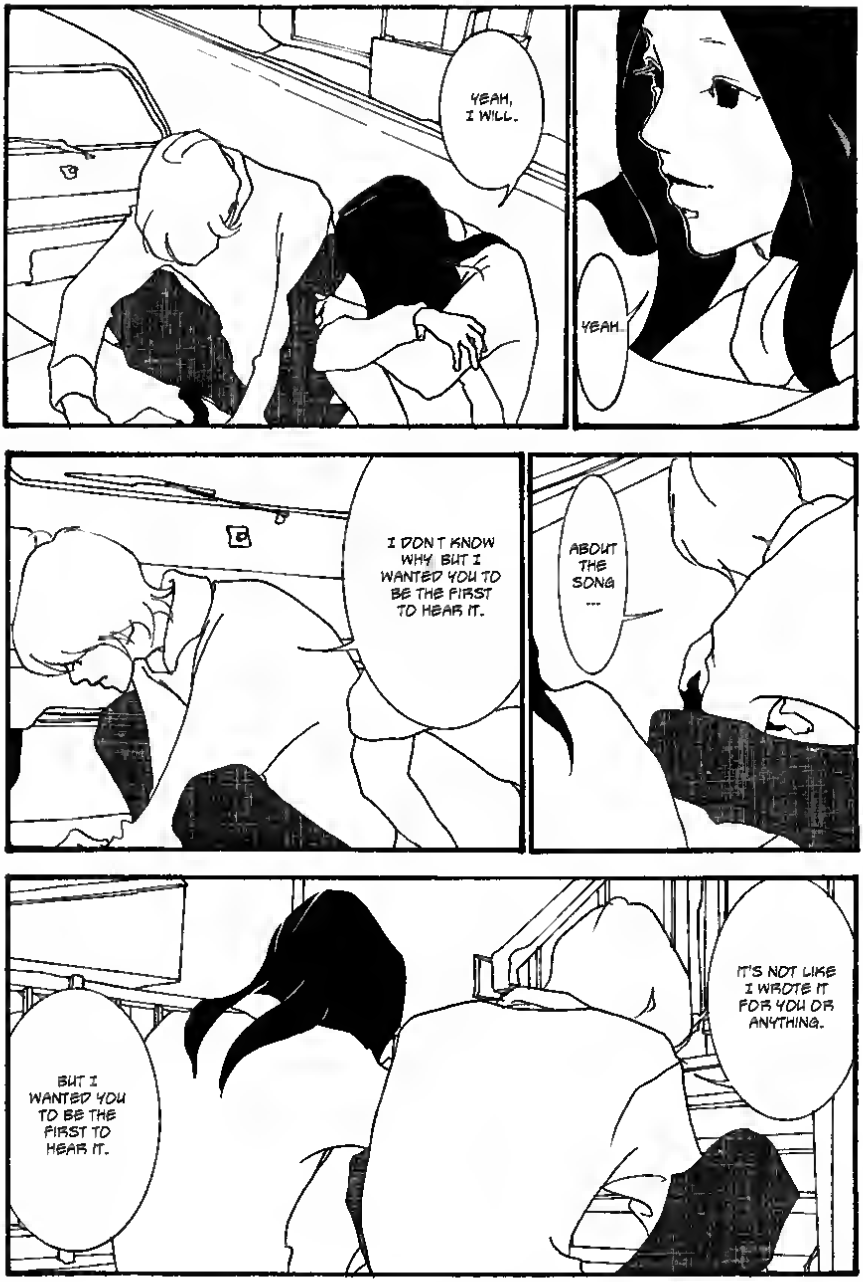
I'VE BEEN GREAT!
YES
...
Oh!
THANKS ...
I'M GLAD
YOU'VE SEEN HIM, HAVEN'T YOU?
HE'S ALWAYS OVER THERE
THE CAT.
Huh?
THERE'S MR BEARD.

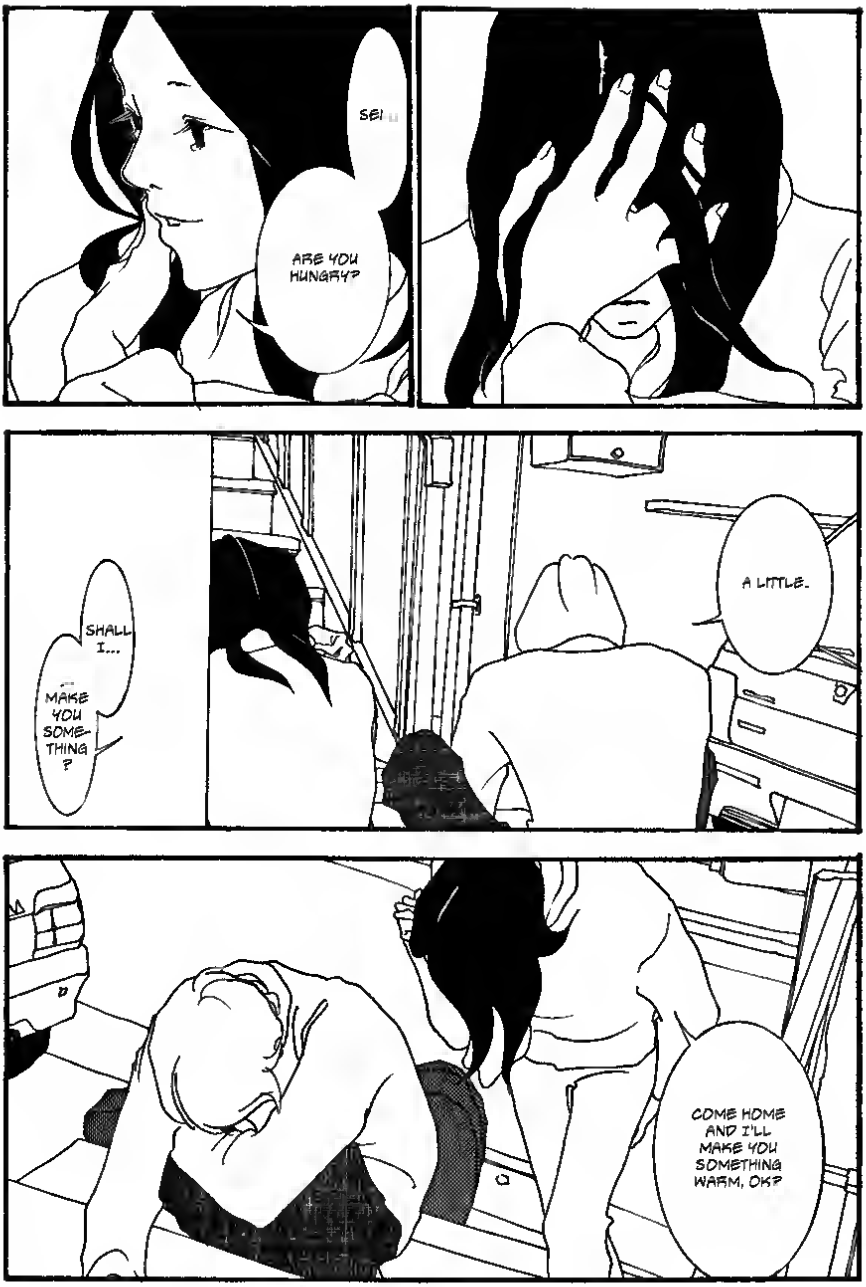


* HE'S REFERRING TO IMAWANO KIYOSHIRO, A FAMOUS ROCKER


YOHOO, MR BEARD!
MROWR!
...WAS A STRAY WHO DIDN'T SEEM TO LIKE HUMANS VERY MUCH.
I'D PETTED HIM A FEW TIMES, BUT I'D NEVER NOTICED THE PATCH UNDER HIS CHIN.


THIS AND THAT
BOUNCING BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN FRIENDS' PLACES.
WHAT
HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO?
YOUR HAIR'S ...
... GROWN OUT.
I SEE.
YOU'LL HAVE TO CUT IT FOR ME AGAIN.


YEAH, I WILL.
YEAH.
I DON'T KNOW WHY. BUT I WANTED YOU TO BE THE FIRST TO HEAR IT.
ABOUT THE SONG ...
BUT I WANTED YOU TO BE THE FIRST TO HEAR IT.
IT'S NOT LIKE I WROTE IT FOR YOU OR ANYTHING.


SEI
ARE YOU HUNGRY?
A LITTLE.
SHALL I...
MAKE YOU SOMETHING?
COME HOME AND I'LL MAKE YOU SOMETHING WARM, OK?

SEI'S SONG...

SEI'S SONG...

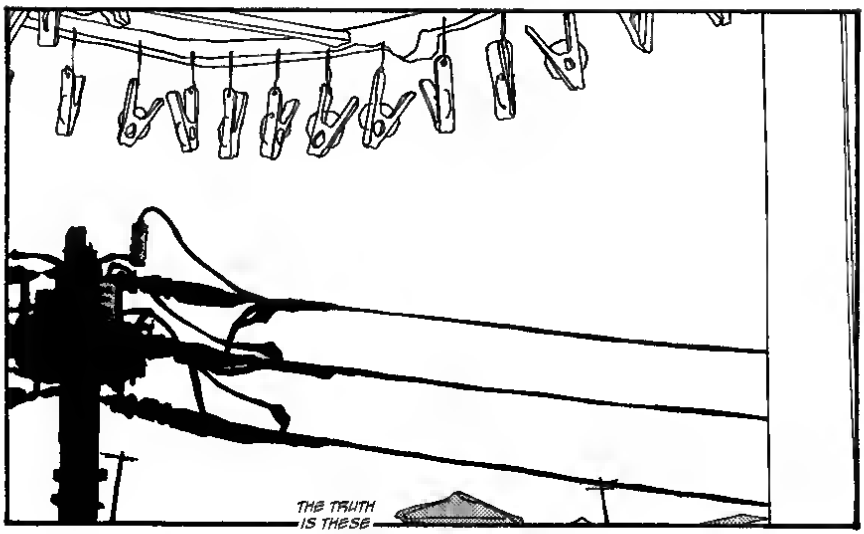
WASN'T ABOUT LOVE OR ROMANCE.
IT WAS ABOUT BEING A KID
AND WANTING TO BE
THAT GUY SINGING AND PLAYING GUITAR.

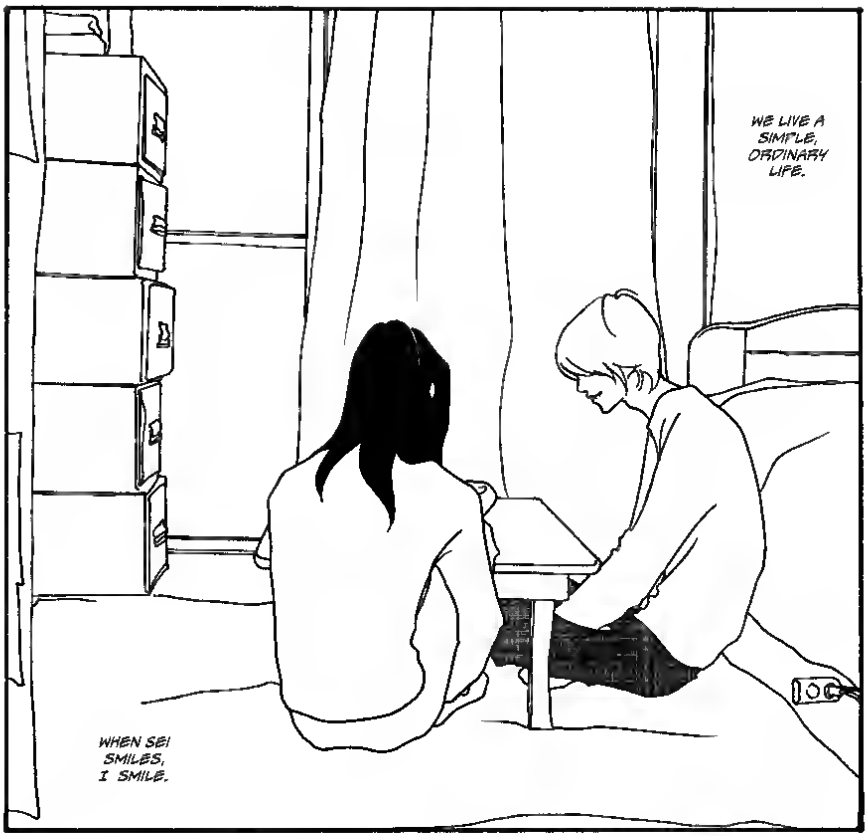
IT WAS ABOUT REMEMBERING
BEING A KID
AND WANTING TO PLAY THE GUITAR SO MUCH
AND ALWAYS HOPING
SOMEDAY IT WOULD REALLY HAPPEN.

WHETHER HE SUCCEEDS OR NOT, SEI WILL ALWAYS WRITE
MY FAVORITE SONGS.

HIS SONG WAS TENDER AND LOVELY AND PRECIOUS.

I TRIED TO HIDE MY TEARS.


THE TRUTH IS THESE ORDINARY DAYS...
...WERE SO VERY FRAGILE.
IT WAS A MIRACLE WE DIDN'T LOSE THEM.



END